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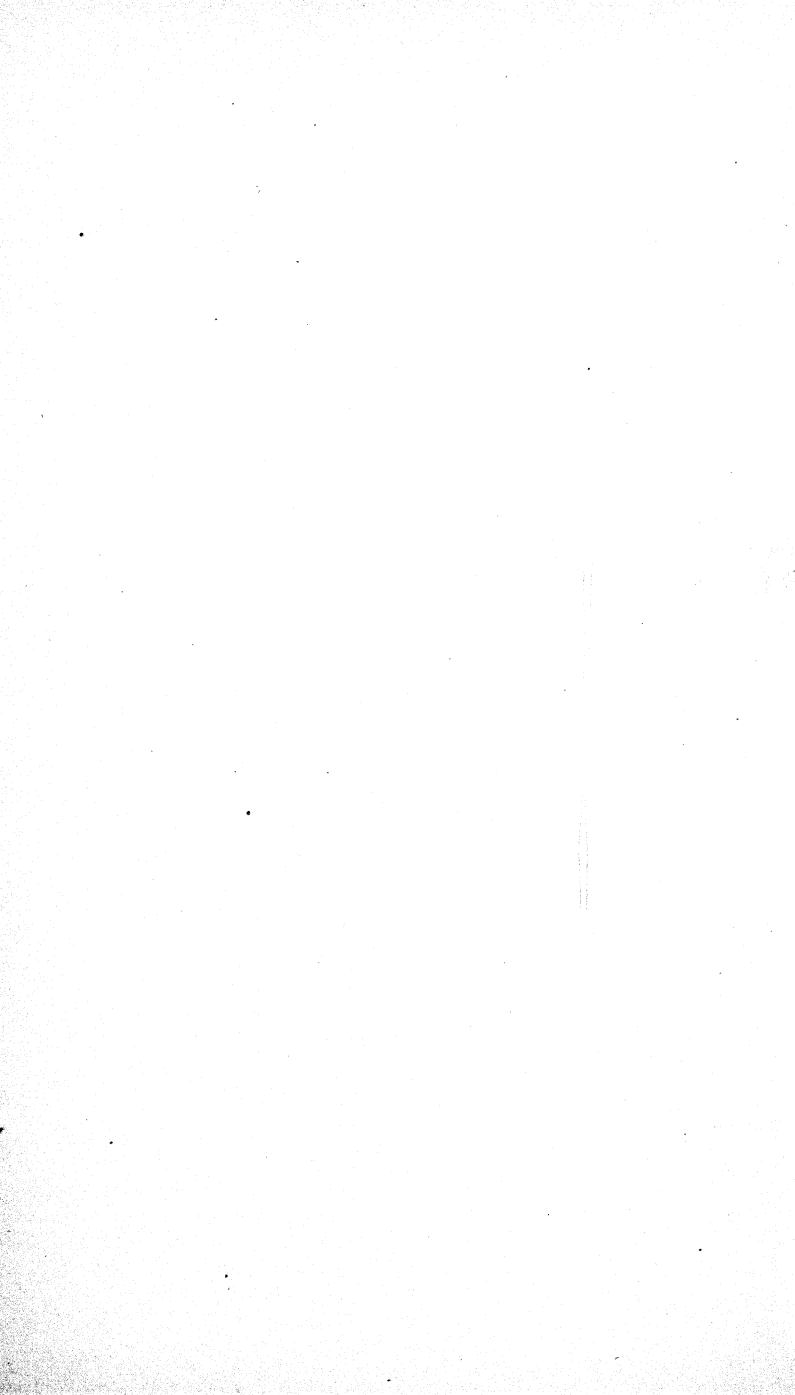
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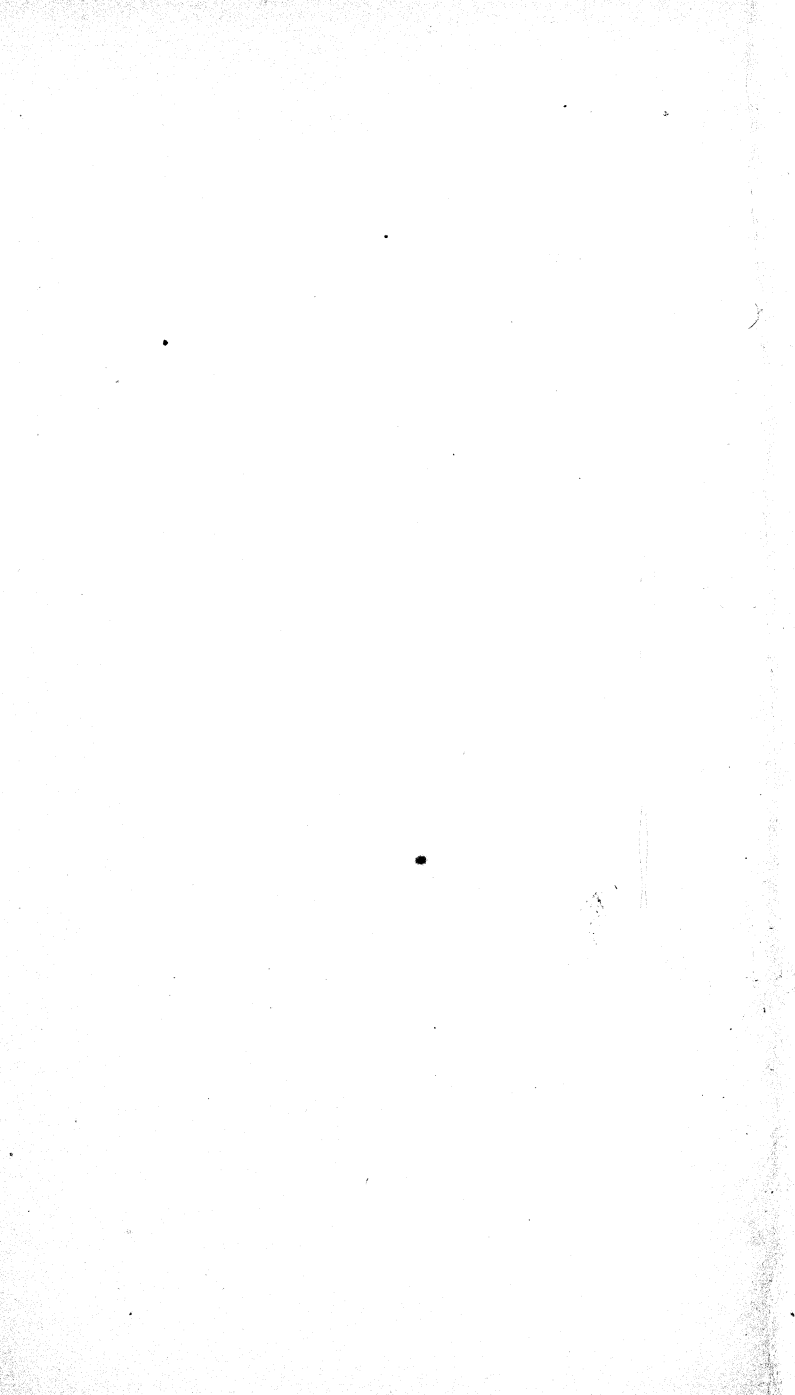
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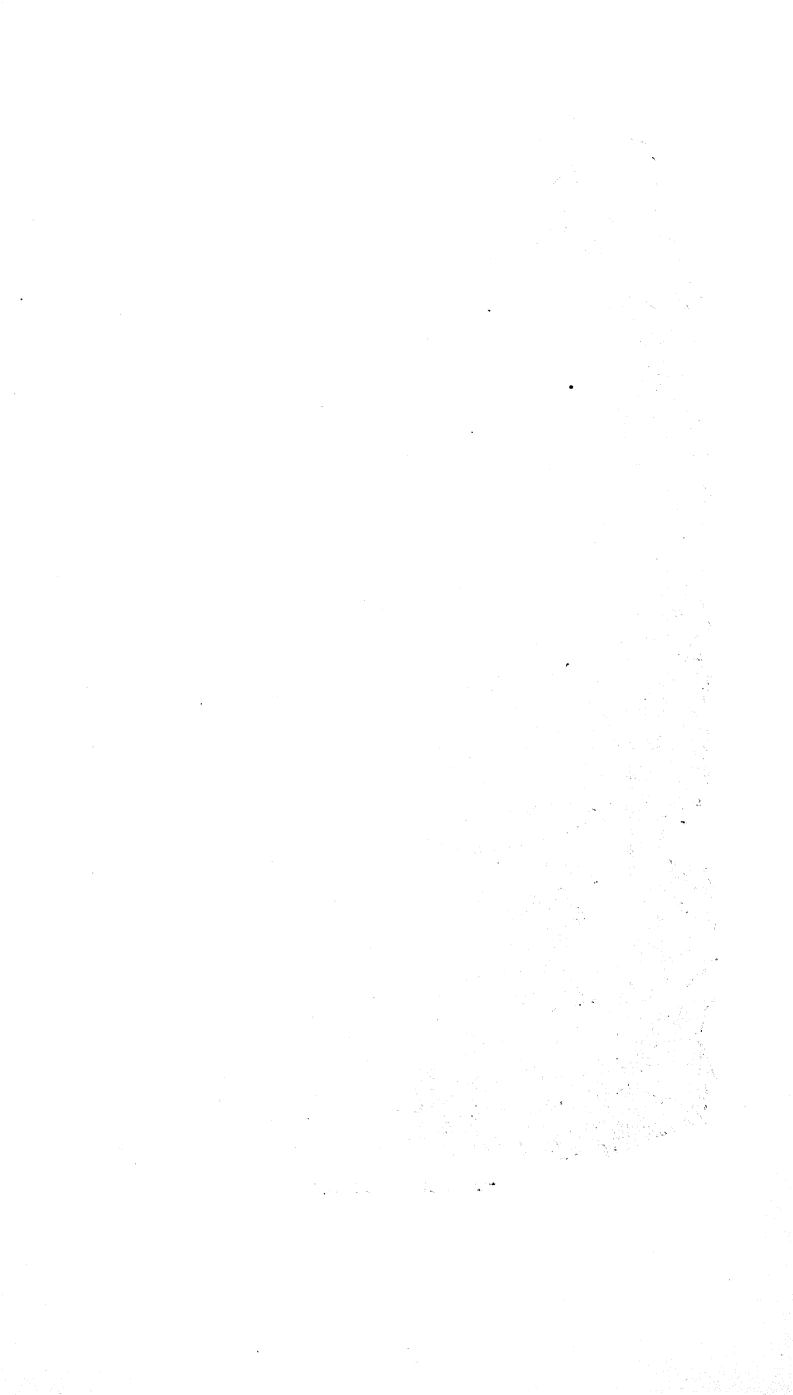
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THE EBONY IDOL.







"THE RECEPTION."

EFlanders, Mrs G W.

THE

EBONY IDOL.

"It is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols."

JEREMIAH.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON & COMPANY,
443 & 445 BROADWAY.
1860.

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THE EBONY IDOL.

CHAPTER I.

"Chief master-gunner am I of this town ;
Something I must do to procure me grace."—HENRY V.

MY dear Reader—allow me to introduce to your distinguished consideration, the Rev. Mr. Cary.

You will please excuse the gentleman's preoccupation and indifference to introductory etiquette, since he has not the faintest intimation that he is the individual introduced. He does, and always will, suppose it to be some *other* Mr. Cary. He might have been the possessor of Titbottom's magical spectacles all the days of his life, without dreaming of the imperfections of his own heart, or experiencing one longing desire to see himself as others see him !

But we do not wish to criticize the gentleman in his innocent ignorance of our proximity.

Mr. Cary, as you perceive, is seated in his old arm-

chair, in the home parlor of the Parsonage. See how cheerily the rock-maple fire roars and glows behind the polished brasses ! How the fire-light dances out co-quettishly over the tidy hearth, casting a whole flood of radiance on the occupant of the chair ; flying onward to the book-case in the corner ; struggling faintly toward the curtains, and suddenly retreating, curls down behind the wooden sticks, while small jets of gaudy-colored flame peep cautiously upward, as if playing at bo-peep with some other maple fire !

The door opens, and a little girl glides in with a pair of faded slippers, which she quietly deposits upon the hearth, and without speaking, for she divines her father's mood ; lays her dimpled cheek upon his shoulder, and encircles his neck with her arm.

Mechanically the father enfolds her in a caress, but his eyes still pry into the glowing embers, and his brow knits for itself another wrinkle.

As he sits there, with his shadow thrown upon the white wall by the warm fire-light, we gaze at him thoughtfully, as at another of those wondrous studies in God's inexhaustible studio, where, like the child vainly striving to match the fancy-grass in the garden, we weary ourselves in futile efforts to trace in feature or spirit the counterpart of a fellow-mortal !

The rough outlines, the compressed lips, and muscular frame, are each indicative of decision, and the firmest of wills. Phrenologically we are warned, that log-

ical combat may be profitably left alone, and to retire with precipitancy whenever that gentleman approaches an argument or a hobby ! If there is any one fact established by Mr. Cary as a mental fixture, it is a conviction of his personal infallibility of judgment and action. Slow and skeptical in his recognition of modern innovations, his heart softens reluctantly, and his decisions close upon his reason with more unrelenting incarceration, than iron doors and bolts upon the victim of crime.

Ignorant of the vices which dig such fatal pits for the feet of our young men, Mr. Cary's life had been invulnerable to temptation. Although pinched by poverty, and early thrown upon his own resources, he had nevertheless struggled through a respectable education, firmly keeping aloof from debt, and while he did not hesitate to earn an honest penny by manual labor, he was too manly-hearted to lean for support upon the Female Charitable Associations, which, for some unaccountable reason, seem indispensable to the interests of modern theology !

Mr. Cary's initiation to the duties of the ministry had commenced at the mature period of thirty years, at which time he had been called to assume the pastoral charge of the church in Minden. We say *the* church, for, though there were other churches in Minden, yet the bulk of the people there were admirably Presbyterian ; an exemplary body of Christians, who had, many

of them, been born in the same town, baptized at the same font, played together in childhood, intermarried, and with blended interests and affections, grown stronger and wiser ; regarding the Church as the most holy and impregnable fortress, to which humanity can flee for succor in this world, or safety in that to come.

The aged Pastor, who had labored an honest life away, and been laid to rest where the white marble gleams out its simple inscription of his many virtues, was the only Shepherd the Flock had known, until, having borne him upon their own shoulders to his burial, they had invited Mr. Cary to become the recipient of his sacred mantle.

If they had loved the stranger less, their reverence for ministerial sanctity was unabated ; and it is a question whether any Romish Pope ever swayed a more influential sceptre over the minds of his followers. To consult the *minister*, was the first step toward the adoption of all infringements upon old-established customs ; and if, shaking his head, he said he was not " clear " that it would be for the " best," there was not in all Minden an individual bold or stubborn enough to gainsay his decision. To impugn his motives, or to intimate a question of his infallibility, would have been considered little short of a moral outrage. Men and women seldom took the liberty of smiling in his presence, and as for " on dits " and " bon mots," they were unthought of ! Little boys regarded him with the

same terror they did the Doctor, and little girls "bowed low" at his approach, resuming their sports only when the atmosphere was supposed to be well ventilated of his sanctity !

This description, which, in the regions of carnal *éclaircissement*, may be considered almost a caricature, will yet be recognized by others for its truthfulness. Especially is it still true of the remote inland towns, and it is to be regretted by old and young, that this wholesome restraint of even excessive reverence is so rapidly disappearing before the so-called Light and Reason of the present day.

Without the church, the community was a quiet, decorous people, with no pretensions to being different or better than its neighbors. And yet to say, "I am from Minden," was a small letter of introduction in its way, since one felt certain that a Minden man was honest in his dealings,—had a little ready cash wherewith to meet his expenditures,—that he drove good horses,—respected his promises, paid for his newspapers,—and was, in short, a paragon of that negative virtue that consists in the absence of smaller vices. Even the deacons bore unblemished reputations ; and as for gossip, the capital was so very limited, that the ladies were not unfrequently compelled to discuss new recipes and fashions, for lack of a sister's frailties upon which to descant. And thus, day after day, the natural and moral sun rose and set upon the pretty village ; and had

a pleasure party from the city happened in upon them of a sunny afternoon, they would have been pardonable in mistaking Minden for Rasselas's Happy Valley.

Such was the church and people to whom Mr. Cary had been called to break the Bread of Life ; and being, as we have said, of unprogressive tendency, and having been educated in the obsolete notion that the Clergy were called of God expressly to preach the Gospel, it had never occurred to him that it was his duty to preach any thing else. The "*one idea*" spent its strength before penetrating the density of the pine forests and granite palisades which encircled the rural Minden, and seemed always crying aloud to the enemy—

"Procul, O procul esti profani!"

Here, had Mr. Cary located himself in his first love for the ministry, and here, with the talents given him, he had labored patiently, if not zealously, until the period of his introduction to the Reader. He had been absent during the last few weeks, in attendance upon the meeting of a religious association, which had been invoked by the brethren for the purpose of inquiry into the causes of the dearth of religious interest existing in the churches, as well as for the spiritual welfare of the clergy themselves.

From this convention Mr. Cary is just returned with his heart aglow ; and it is the enthusiasm of his

newly awakened cogitations, that has given the unwonted abstraction, and fixedness of gaze, which has already been noticed.

He had found the assembled clergymen absorbed in the great topic of Abolitionism ; eloquent in denunciation, and fervent in exhortation, toward such of the brethren as had "slumbered and slept" through the African Crusade. Individual frailties, home sins, and the complicated wickednesses of New England, presented altogether too sickly a harvest for the sickle of the philanthropist, and the lukewarm were warned to come up manfully to the greater combat!—to advance in solid column against the diabolical slaveholder. No matter what passions were excited in the human breast! Let men be lashed into demons! Let fraternal blood ebb and flow like the tide! Let the Union be dissolved! God would smile upon the Fratricide! Heaven would sanction the treason of the Traitor!

Let but the Bond go free!

As in morals, it is well known that persons educated in the comparative purity of country life, often yield the most readily to the seductive influences of the city—the very novelty of vice being its attraction ; so, intellectually, men of sterling talents are attracted from their even orbit by that strange fascination mind wields over mind ; and the staid and doubting stickler for *fact* is not unfrequently the very first to adopt the absurdest *ism* of the day.

How often, when some new hobby is rendering the public ridiculous, and a new convert is announced, we hear the expression, "he is the *last* man I should have thought of;" meaning that his former exhibitions of mind and morals had been antagonistic to any such exhibition of erratic non-reasoning! It was precisely the quiet, monotonous life Mr. Cary had been enjoying in the township of Minden, that made the zeal of his brethren more attractive to him. The subject of Slavery had never been very seriously considered by him. He knew that slavery had existed previous to, and at the period of our Blessed Saviour's advent, but he had no recollection of the Redeemer's considering that subject paramount to the salvation of souls. Indeed, he had considered it one of the institutions of the Old Testament, which was tolerated as a necessity; and so Mr. Cary had gone on thinking the Bible and "Continental Congress" authorities to be taken for granted. But when he found himself a unit among a throng of positive clergymen, who shamed his rustic garb and bearing by their easy and fluent address, the battery of whose opposition he shrank from provoking, it is little wonder that, having no personal prejudices to overcome, he opened his heart to a comfortable conviction of the popularism! As he listened to the rehearsal of the wonderful things these clergymen had accomplished, in preaching *at* the South, and investing funds in the underground railroad; as his mental vision

opened upon the atrocities committed upon the miserable slaves, who were torn with red-hot pincers, hunted by bloodhounds, and roasted alive for the amusement of overseers; it certainly can excite little surprise, that, being unskilled in political trickery, and accustomed to believe in the honesty of mankind, he was soon prepared to endorse the abolition platform with all its absurdities; passing from one metamorphosis to another, until he shone out resplendent as a perfect Abolitionist, with wings proportioned to the absurdest flights.

And thus Mr. Cary sits in his arm-chair, and traces out the similitudes of his musings in the curling flames before him. The whole space between Mason's and Dixon's Line and the Mexican Gulf, stretches out before his vision one immense negro mart! each white man an ogre armed with fagots and cat-o'-nine tails, reveling in the tortures he inflicts!

As he muses, his own past inactivity looms up before him, lashing him for his stupidity, and culpable ignorance of his duty to the shackled slave. The clarion note has been sounded into his deafened ear, and he resolves that he will shake off this unchristian stupor, gird on his armor, and if needs be, die upon the field of battle! David Copperfield, in his first zeal for a seedy wardrobe, never sighed for a shabby waistcoat as devoutly as Mr. Cary now aspired to tar and feathers! "Riding on a rail" seemed a mode of convey-

ance so desirable, and so soothing to his conscience, that he longed to rush into the heart of the South, and hurl his argumentative firebrands into the very face and eyes, of the slaveholders! Oh that his sheltering arm could clasp every bondman in the Universe in one fraternal embrace! Ah, he moaned! had I but wealth to ransom them from their cruel bondage, and bear them back to the peaceful shores of their own Africa! Alexander-like, he sighed that there were no more slaves to be thus conditionally ransomed!

As these extensive and magnanimous aspirations aired themselves in impossibilities, and Mr. Cary's conviction of his personal inability and poverty settled slowly down upon his throbbing heart, he groaned aloud in his agony of spirit, and cast about him for some humbler sphere which should be operated upon by his modicum of influence!

Then uprose before him the quiet valley of Minden! The little village nestling lovingly within the mountains' bosoms! the modest spire of the solitary church! the upturned, eager faces of those who, Sabbath after Sabbath, resorted there

"Hungry for the Bread of Life."

Here, at least, he was supreme! Here, at least, the sable sons of Africa should receive justice! He would arouse his people to a true sense of their duty! They

should act, "*act in the living present,*" and a war-cry should arise from that humble church, which all the world should hear, and which should cause the great heart of the South to quake!



CHAPTER II.

Antony.—You grow presumptuous.

Ventidus.—I take the privilege of plain love to speak.—DRYDEN.

MR. CARY was still absorbed in his African castles, when Mrs. Cary entered, bearing in either hand a well-polished candlestick, the contents of which carry us back, as if by magic, to days of langsyne. Not the degenerate dripping nuisances retailed in our shops for a York shilling per dozen, but the substantial candle of home manufacture, by the light of which every New England boy has read Robinson Crusoe, Sinbad the Sailor, and Tristram Shandy! Ah, yes! and is not the memory still fraught with oleaginous reminiscences of the “dipping-days.” We were not simple juveniles then, to be snubbed out of the kitchen by the “*help!*” How graciously we were permitted to assist in arranging the wicks upon the rods! to run upon all sorts of errands to notable dames and spinsters, for small contributions from their hoards of beeswax! and when, by chance, we returned with pockets full of nuts or

apples, it is our humble opinion we were as much elated, and near the perfection of bliss, as mortality in small-clothes can well be !

Then came the melting, and the delicate process of forming the dip. How carefully, in our restless admiration, we avoided too close proximity to the arm of the presiding genius, for who of us but knew no mercy was extended to the jostler unskilled in the art of dodging !

As the candles grew into importance, and assumed

“ A local habitation, and a name,”

with what intense delight we prostrated ourselves in Oriental fashion, to take a *perspective*, *prospective*, and *retrospective* view of their increasing charms ! At rare intervals, when the dipper was forced to leave her treasures, and we were allowed to assume her responsibility, with what trembling eagerness we held the rod, and watched the swaying liquid, as we slowly raised the immersed candles and rejoiced in their growing perfection ! It was an occasion when the moral of the “ Envious Frog ” was to be regarded, and when we particularly felt the force of that appeal which invokes a humble heart in all seasons of prosperity !

But to return to Mrs. Cary, whom we have most ungallantly left standing with the candlesticks in her fair hands !

The smile of gratification at her husband's return

which lights up her plain features, renders her face agreeable, and we feel attracted toward her by the gentle and dignified *tout-ensemble* of her person and bearing; but Mr Cary, still insensible to the love-light of those dark hazel eyes, only arouses from his reverie when she addresses him.

“Have you nothing to tell me of my old home friends, Mr. Cary? Did they send me no greetings? Neither have you told me of the meetings. I trust they proved precious seasons to the souls of all present.”

Mr. Cary groaned.

“I hope no one is dead?” cried the lady, paling.

“Dead?” he reiterated, abstractedly, “no one is dead—so far as I am informed, your friends are in health;” and instinctively his fingers wove themselves into Indian wigwams, and his eyes returned to their peering into the flickering flames. A second low groan escaped him.

Mrs. Cary regarded him nervously. “Are you ill, Mr. Cary?” she asked, with a shade of anxiety in her voice; “pray, what *do* you groan so for?”

“Groan!” ejaculated the minister, now fully aroused; “why shouldn’t I groan! Why should I forget in my own personal comforts, the miseries of millions who are this moment held in cruel bondage, with no eye to pity, and no human arm to save! Who has made us to differ? Why am not I, and you, and Mary

here, writhing beneath the lashes of a fiendish task-master ! ”

“ Mr. Cary,” asked his wife, gravely, placing her hand upon his shoulder, “ are you crazed ? ”

“ Crazed ! ” echoed our friend, springing up and pacing the little room with monster strides ; “ Mrs. Cary, you are very obtuse ! But it is the fate of man, perhaps his cross, that in his loftiest ambitions he stands isolated from companionship where he ought soonest to find it ! In the great work before me I had hoped to be encouraged by your sympathy, and strengthened by your prayers ! ”

We will not jot down (for our readers to *skip*) the long and not very interesting harangue in which Mr. Cary indulged himself. The amiable Mrs. Cary, entirely unaccustomed to enthusiastic scenes, and never during her life before, having heard her husband manifest the least zeal for martyrdom, listened in amazement to his violent expressions, and when they softened, drawing her knitting from her pocket, very quietly devoted herself to counting off the stitches for the heel of her worsted hose. But did this placidity upon the part of his better-half gratify the gentleman ? Indeed it did not ! What man in excitement is ever satisfied with composure ? Cutting a long stride short, our reverend gentleman wheeled right-about-face, and assuming the stately attitude of arms in the rear, blurted out :

“ Madam, why do you knit ? Is it wise, do you

think, when the world is groaning with oppression, and your own sex are torn from country, and friends, and their own offspring, to pander to the power and lust of their self-appointed masters, for you to sit there in that easy chair, before this cheerful fire, and *knit* ! ”

“ Well,” said Mrs. Cary, who had now, as we might say, ‘scented the game,’ “ perhaps it is not ! ” And settling the stitches carefully in the middle of the needle, and winding the worsted systematically around the tips, she returned the same to her capacious pocket.

“ My dear,” she asked, returning his impatient gaze, “ what do you think I *had* better do ? ”

“ Fight and pray,” cried the excited gentleman. “ Be up and doing ! labor ! we can all do something ! You remember the widow’s mite, Mrs. Cary ? ”

“ Yes,” rejoined the lady, sadly, “ we *can* pray, and we always have prayed ; but as for fighting, it seems to me to be a good deal like Don Quixote and his windmill. We can make ourselves generally uncomfortable, I suppose—can neglect our proper vocations for such as will be serviceable to no one ; but how, I should like to be informed, can that help the condition of the slave ? There never was a colored person, so far as I know, anywhere in this vicinity, and there is not certainly surplus wealth enough in our little village, to purchase one first-class slave, even if it could be brought into the treasury.”

“ What of that ! ” broke in Mr. Cary, increasing his

violence. "There is the influence! the influence, Mrs. Cary! Women," he muttered contemptuously, "never should try to argue; however good you may be at heart, you are terribly deficient in logic. Knit, Madam, but don't argue! You remember the advice of St. Paul in regard to your own sex?"

"St. Paul was a bachelor, and possibly had been disappointed, as most bachelors have," cried the lady, with a malicious fling at Mr. Cary's own heart experience. "It has occurred to me more than once, that if women made themselves as superbly ridiculous with their isms and jack-o'-lanterns, as you men do, we should at least deserve to be called the 'weaker vessel!'"

Mr. Cary, fairly gasping with indignation, confronted his slightly sneering help-mate!

"Madam, you speak lightly of God's anointed! you blaspheme!" and, we are very sorry to say, Mr. Cary shook his clenched fist in such close juxtaposition with his wife's face, that she involuntarily shrank from it, but recovering herself, said pleasantly, "A man who possesses such tenderness for the slave, should have more regard for his wife's nerves; if we cannot talk without excitement, we had better not pursue the subject;" and Mrs. Cary, raising from the table one of the inimitable tallow candles whose praises we have sung, disappeared through a side door, reappearing presently with a dish of apples so red and tempting, that they naturally suggested great lenity in one's con-

demnation of our first mother's transgression. Wheeling her husband's easy chair nearer the table, Mrs. Cary selected the finest of the fruit, and giving a finishing polish with a snowy napkin, proceeded to pare, and place the same in charming proximity to the gentleman's seat; then was added a glass of new cider, the remembrance of which, even at this remote period, causes the historian to pause with emotion!

Happy the woman who can thus beat the domestic sword into a pruning-hook, and thrice-favored the man, whose wife can thus "stoop to conquer!"

The little palatable temptation thus gracefully extended as a peace-offering, was as frankly accepted by the pastor. When the "one idea," after performing an elliptical evolution around the conjugal dessert, resumed its ascendancy, what with apples and cider, fire-light, easy chair, and loving wife, the whole subject seemed so exceedingly modified, that conversation soon glided into a smoother channel, and the woes of white and black were for a brief time forgotten! But when, at length, Mr. Cary wiped his lips complacently with the snowy linen, he took his wife's hand within his own, and said:

"My dear, for many years I have labored in the midst of my little flock, and so far as an enlightened conscience can pass judgment upon one's own actions, I have endeavored faithfully to discharge my duties in the fear of my Heavenly Father. It is very strange

that during all this time I have regarded Slavery with indifference. Indeed, the question of its divine sanction had never occurred to me. But this sinful lethargy has been fully broken, and I must now atone for the past, and labor while the day lasts."

Mrs. Cary pressed his rough hand caressingly between both of hers. She respected his sincerity, and had always relied implicitly upon his judgment.

"You know," she said, thoughtfully, "that a year last summer, I spent four weeks in the very place where this convention was held. From my earliest remembrance they have had three good churches there, all of them occupied upon the Sabbath by large congregations. The kind feeling existing between these different denominations was delightful, and it was impossible to say which was the most zealous and exemplary. But you know as well as I can tell you, what this abolition movement has done for that unfortunate township. The ministers talked, prayed, and preached abolitionism, until politics and religion became one and inseparable. And what has been the result? 'By their fruits ye shall know them!' I saw what were the fruits, and so did the people,—and the ministers who called this association together to pray over the low state of Zion, and devise ways and means for the re-establishment of their churches! The people who preferred Scripture to politics on Sundays, refused to attend church. Even Deacon Gleason, who was in truth an abolitionist in the

fullest sense, deserted Mr. Slade's church. 'Why, deacon,' I said, 'I hear you are stopping at home Sabbath days, because your minister prays for the slave!'

"'Humph!' said he, 'I don't mind his praying for the slave—I do that myself, and so does every Christian, I hope, but I do mind his overlooking the interests and souls of his own flock, for the bodies of negroes!'

"'Not bodies, deacon—you are too severe,' I said.

"'I say bodies, and I *mean* bodies!' returned the deacon. 'Do you suppose,' he continued, 'that a clergyman expects to convert negroes by abusing their masters, and exciting the North to unkindness and outrage? I find no such precedent in my Bible, Mrs. Cary. Mr. Slade availed himself of the privileges of his desk, not only to preach abolition doctrines, but even attacked the motives of public men, whose characters are as unsullied as his own, declaring them to be unfit for office and confidence. Even his pastoral visits were converted into political wrangles, and instead of canvassing the town for souls, he exerted his influence for the polls. Finally, on the eve of election, he preached a very bitter political sermon, when half the congregation left in the midst of the discourse. Some few returned when the excitement had abated—more went to worship at the other churches, and others, who were too strongly orthodox to secede, preferred to remain at home. This state of things extended gradually to the remaining churches, until, as you know, for the

last year not a church door has been opened upon the Sabbath day. The charitable societies are broken up, and Sabbath loungers are visible everywhere; and I am told, more ardent spirits have been consumed than for any ten years previous.' Now, Mr. Cary, who is responsible for this state of things? Who made these churches a nuisance? Who withheld the Bread of Life from these famishing souls, and when they asked for bread, gave them a stone?—and drove them out into the fallow ground to feed upon husks, and return to their wallowing in the mire?—to desecrate the Sabbath, and acquire habits which are certain, ultimately, to plunge both themselves and their innocent families into disgrace? It is easy for a clergyman, when his own will and passions have withheld dew and nourishment from his vineyard, to pronounce its barrenness accursed of God, and to weep over the blighted vintage as being the 'mysterious dispensation of Providence.' But I believe, Mr. Cary, from my heart of hearts, that when the recording angel traces out the pious sacrilege, he will add, weeping tears of blood, 'Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been better for that man if he had not been born!'"

"Mrs. Cary," said her husband, with the longest and deepest of groans, "'Judge not, that ye be not judged,' and remember, 'with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.' We have each of us an inward monitor, designed for our individual guidance, and what

may seem duty to one, may be cavilled at by another. Would it not be wise first, 'to cast out the beam out of thine own eye: and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye?' "

"Remember, my dear," said the wife, warmly, "it is Christ, himself, who says, 'Ye shall know them by their fruits.' 'Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.' Now tell me honestly, Mr. Cary, as a Christian who dares to speak his conviction, even when truth clashes with prejudice—has the fruit of these clerical efforts been good or evil?"

"My dear," said Mr. Cary, laying his hand upon the family Bible, "it is the hour for our devotions!"

CHAPTER III.

"The ruling passion—be it what it will—
The ruling passion conquers reason still."—POPE.



ALL over hill and dale
lay the spotless robe winter
so lovingly throws over the
landscape dismantled by his
blasts. Cosily nestled the
little clumps of evergreens
down into its soft folds,
while the naked branches
of the elms and maples, and

the straight, lithe birch, were bending beneath the snow
wreaths fallen during the night. Above the aristocratic
dwelling and low thatched cottage, the light flakes had
alike piled themselves, lodging in every nook and cran-
ny, sifting down into the sooty chimney, creeping in at
the window sills, and cuddling in huge heaps at the very
door and gateways of cot and church.

Look yonder at the mountains—those "Battlements

of God!"—not stern and frowning and awful in the density of their impenetrable forests as when we gaze upon them in summer; but smooth, and soft, and white as the wool-fleece—the tops glowing and deepening into gorgeous hues of purple and crimson, as the Day-God greets them with burning kisses, and rushes onward in his chariot of flame! And see how the pale blue smoke steals up from the love-altars scattered here and there, just where the mountains slope down to the plains below! Man is not yet abroad to awake you from the dreamy delight of your ejaculatory orisons, and involuntarily you shout out joyously, and send your voices ringing through the keen, metallic atmosphere, in some simple pæan of adoration, learned far back in childhood, perchance in the Sabbath school of just such a church as that whose quaint spire glitters on the plain below.

"God made the country, but man made the town!"

But the inhabitants of Minden are astir. The snow of the previous night is tossed lightly aside; the smoke curls cheerfully up from the church-roof, and cordially at length the sweet-toned bell peals out its weekly invitation, "Do come—do come—do come"—and the snow-capped mountains upon all sides take up and prolong the echo, "come—come!" And so the village church is filled.

The evening in which we left Mr. Cary at his family devotions, closed without any renewal of the subject

under discussion, and for reasons which will readily suggest themselves, Mr. Cary chose to confine his cogitations to his own breast. The night was far advanced when Mr. Cary sought his chamber, but Mrs. Cary, wisely pretending to have long since been sunken in the drowsy deep of slumber, allowed her husband's unwonted irregularity to pass without comment, trusting to time and common sense to set her "gude mon" right. Words therefore cannot portray the amazement of that excellent lady, when upon this identical succeeding Sabbath, Mr. Cary launched forth into a discourse well calculated to scatter fire-brands upon the right hand and upon the left! He confessed his long and culpable neglect of duty, and he exhorted his little flock to immediate and earnest investigation of their own personal responsibilities. Feeling the subject grow upon him as he continued, Mr. Cary gradually enlarged upon his first intention, and warmed into denunciation, until with the blindest of infatuations he lost sight of the boundary line that separates mental independence from folly, and mingled religion with politics until he concocted a kind of moral salad, intolerable as nourishment, and unpalatable as a relish!

Once astride his theme became his hobby, and he needed neither whip nor spur to carry him beyond the limits of discretion. He urged his people to remember that the ballot-box was at their disposal—that the vote was the highest prerogative of free men, and he did not

hesitate to declare that the man who could countenance slavery even by inaction, was an enemy to his God and country ; and that he who would, directly or indirectly, sustain another in the traffic of human flesh, was unworthy of trust or confidence, and should therefore be ineligible to office.

It was just here, when Mr. Cary, with both arms extended, was raising himself upon tiptoe, preparatory to rendering his sentence emphatic by making an &c. of his person, that a heavy step upon the floor, accompanied by the clump of a wooden crutch, announced to the excited audience that Squire Bryan, the rich, and, of course, influential great man of Minden, was leaving the church.

It must be remembered that in our country villages freshly-barbered young men do not promenade the aisles that pretty girls may be induced to look at them ; neither do young misses go out "because they are tired ;"—fainting is not fashionable ; and the physicians, for some sharp reason of their own, do not resort to the stratagem of being called out ; so that when church-going is attempted, good order and pious demeanor prevail, and whether the people hear or sleep, they hear or sleep to the end. Consequently, Squire Bryan's withdrawal excited immediate attention. From looking at the minister, the people commenced looking at each other ; and several gentlemen, who were accustomed to consider the Squire as a " burning and shining

light to all that place," sat unusually erect, assuming a very dignified and injured appearance. Even Mr. Cary flagged for a sentence or two, and with an "ahem" of embarrassment, descended from his rhetorical flight with ungraceful precipitancy. When at last the benediction was announced, and the male portion of the congregation waited in the vestibule for their better-halves, the whisperings and impressive nods and shakes of the head exchanged between them, did not escape the jealous eye of Mrs. Cary, as she pressed her way out.

Mr. Cary, himself, who always paused in passing to speak with such of his parishioners as he seldom saw during the week-days, could not be insensible to a kind of restraint in these greetings, entirely foreign to their former unaffected cordiality.

There is, perhaps, no medium which conveys so readily the good will of a man's heart, as his mode of shaking hands. To a person whose sensitive nature is affected by such trifles, no courtesy of expression or demeanor can atone for the cold, stony hand grasp. The warm heart sends its magnetism to the palm, and strangers who have once shaken hands in the most profound silence and darkness, possess each a key to the other's inner nature, often disregarded, but rarely leading them astray. Fearfully does this theory manifest itself in declining friendships! How often in sorrow, and incipient disgrace, has the breaking heart been yet

more keenly hurt, not by the averted eye or curling lip, half so readily as by the faint pressure and unproffered embrace of those whom it had loved.

For the first time during the long period of his ministry, Mr. Cary passed out of the church with a chill in his being. Mrs. Cary, whose frank, impulsive nature knew no hypocrisy, presided over the family lunch with a "don't-do-that-again" air; and little Mary, gazing from one to the other of her parents, secretly wondered at the unusual taciturnity of the Sunday dinner. No allusion was made to the morning's discourse; and Mr. Cary, retiring to his study, remained invisible until the bell again summoned him to his labors.

It would be inferred that our indignant friend Bryan was missing from the afternoon service. Not so; being a man of decided and independent action himself, he believed every other man should be judged with lenity. If Mr. Cary might suppose he had a right to tamper with the ballot box, and make stump speeches in the desk, so had he, Horace Bryan, an equal right to vacate the premises, and leave the reverend gentleman to say his say.

But the Squire is not a man to "nurse his wrath;" so there he sits with his keen, bright eyes, which you feel to be scales of justice, fixed upon the desk, saying as expressively as eyes could say, "Now, Mr. Cary, if you have any Gospel on hand, I am at your disposal." But when, after the introductory exercises, Mr. Cary

arose, reannounced his morning's text, and with a kind of dogged demeanor, announced his intention of "pursuing the subject of his morning's reflections," Squire Bryan, taking his hat, adjusted his crutches, and clumped slowly down the aisle, slamming the door very emphatically after his retreating person.

Neither did matters rest here. Mr. McLean, upon whose farm the Squire held a mortgage, and Mr. Smith, the Postmaster, who had been indebted to Squire Bryan for his appointment, both felt called upon to follow his example. A small stampede was the result; each succeeding slam not a whit inferior to the first, each destructive in its effect upon the speaker's introduction.

Quiet being restored, Mr. Cary proceeded to preach, not "Christ and him crucified," but himself; spreading before his audience his reasons for the positions he had assumed, regretting that offence should be given, but declaring it to be his conviction of duty to preach what he understood to be the requirements of the Gospel, asserting the liberty of speech, and protesting himself willing to fight to the death for freedom and truth. Altogether, he complimented himself a good deal, and rounded his periods with a proper regard to humility and self-distrust. The sermon ended, Mr. Cary read the closing hymn, but the choir remaining silent, it was discovered that the leader had withdrawn.

Now, as evils seldom come alone, it so happened

there was a poor widow, whose only child, a son, upon whom she had leaned as her staff through this earthly pilgrimage, had been smitten with paralysis, and lingered upon the verge of the grave. This widow and this son, turning with natural confidence and affection to the bosom of the church for comfort in their great calamity, had this day presented an humble petition that the pastor and church would pray God, if so be the cup of suffering might pass from them ; feeling assured, as the petition touchingly added, "that when two or three should agree together as touching one thing in Christ's name, it should be granted unto them."

Strange as it may seem, Mr. Cary, in his closing prayer, had well-nigh forgotten the poor widow and her son ! He had prayed for the President of the United States, for the Senate, and "all men in high places ;" he had prayed for sunshine and rain, for seedtime and harvest, for the slave and his master, and all that "were in bonds everywhere." Indeed, he had prayed for everybody and every thing, excepting the two sufferers who had so meekly requested his remembrance ! A low sob stole out from a remote corner, smiting upon his ear, and recalling him to duty. But the words were briefly and almost coldly spoken, as such words are only too apt to be, and there was no listener present but felt that in Mr. Cary's estimation, the widow and son were of small moment, compared with his sable brethren !

And so the people said, as they slowly walked home

together, and they did not forget it when they got home, either. One old lady, who had more than once been grieved by these omissions, even said to a visitor on the following Thursday morning, "that for her part she could always tell when ministers had parishioners in trouble ; for they began either at the Creation or Deluge, and prayed down to that afternoon, when, as if it had just occurred to them, they threw in (in a kind of parenthesis) their petition for some poor dying creeter, for whom they ought to wrestle day and night, and let the President and Senate take keer of themselves a little."



Portrait of that Old Lady.

CHAPTER IV.

And thus it was the multitude received it.—A NICE DISTINCTION.

EARLY in the week, as Mr. Cary was going to the post office, he met Mr. Hobbs.

Let it not be supposed that the pastor had suddenly fallen from grace in the mind of all Minden. He had his friends, and among them, but by no means the best example, was Mr. Hobbs, the husband of a distinguished member of Minden tea-partydom, whom he commonly alluded to by a grammatical lapsus that virtually implied his own non-entity as "Miss Hobbs."

Hobbs was a man of ordinary standing in the village community. Though a person of coarser nature than most men about him, and utterly uncultivated, he yet "held his own," whatever that was, by virtue of certain qualities mostly appreciated among simple-minded prosperous people; he was sober, industrious, and unflinchingly practical in all things. It was his pride not to be "notional," and "to live up to what he thought," in extenuation of which it must be said that

his thoughts were never exacting nor of particularly high flight. It was also a point of pride with him to attend "meeting" with a precise punctuality that gave it the appearance of a business engagement, and to follow in the moral footsteps of his beloved pastor.

Shaking Mr. Cary very cordially by the hand, his admirer congratulated him upon his sermons the Sabbath previous.

"Them is my opinions exactly," he said, "Niggers is our brethren! We have all one Father, and if He does not make any distinction, it is a pretty time of day, says I to Miss Hobbs, for us white folks to set ourselves up, jest because we ain't black! I and Miss Hobbs thinks with you, that all men is created free and equal!"

"Thank you, Mr. Hobbs, I am glad to hear you say that! it is pleasant to hear an encouraging word, after the averted faces I have seen of late. I fear I have given great offence, and I hear that Squire Bryan is very indignant, and was so unjust as to suppose I referred to certain individuals in the house."

Mr. Hobbs hesitated. There sprang a new scruple in his head,

"Which first he scratched, and then he said—"

"Well, I must say, that was exactly what I and Miss Hobbs thought! Says I to Miss Hobbs, says I, if Mr. Cary didn't speak right out in meeting and fit a

tight jacket on to Squire Bryan, I am no judge of what's what! And Miss Hobbs, says she to me, says she, them's my opinion!"

Owing to some reason that has been mysteriously kept secret, Mr. Cary did not pause to correct the impression that Hobbs had received; but each, after some further trivialities, went upon his way.

This was but one of many greetings that the worthy pastor received upon that morning, and this owes the distinction of being recorded here solely to the fact that it is fairly representative of all the others.

Contrary to the anticipations of many men in Minden the world continued to go on pretty much as usual, and the next Sunday was eagerly expected. It brought a lengthy and excellent discourse upon charity.

As Squire Bryan, on that day, hopped along homeward with his crutch under one arm, and his little wife Nannie upon the other, he was overtaken by the clergyman.

"It was a charming sermon you gave us this morning, sir," he said at once, "and I am fearful it was needed by us all. For my part I am a stupid almsgiver. Nannie, here, does a thousand little charities every day so gracefully that I wonder everybody else has not thought of them before—it is one of her graces. Now this sermon of yours has actually made me charitably inclined, the sensation penetrates my wallet even, and I am quite in a furor to do something;" and

the Squire stopping and extracting a bill from a well-worn pocket book, extended it toward his pastor. "There, sir, if you could manage to slip that into the hands of that poor widow who was up for prayers last Sabbath, it would really be doing me a favor; I am told, by the way, that the town will be obliged to assist her soon, unless individuals come to her relief. For one, Mr. Cary, I would be willing to do any thing reasonable, and beg you will make use of my purse in whatever manner suggests itself as desirable. We ought not to see one of our neighbors, and especially a Christian woman like Mrs. Wellman, resorting to public charity."

"I thought," said Mr. Cary, "you left church before her petition was read."

"So I did, sir, but I was told (a pinch from Madam) that her petition was very indifferently noticed. It has always surprised me, sinner as I am, that people should still keep up that old custom. It is very beautiful in sentiment, I grant you, but like many other things, worldly and sacred, the spirit is dead. Clergymen mention these requests in their devotions with such indifference in tone and manner, that I must say, Mr. Cary, I long to warm up their blood with the application of a raw hide. I remember one clergyman, who prayed for those in affliction to my liking. He did not pray for every thing else first, as if they were all of more importance than the poor stricken

heart that had cast itself, bleeding, before the altar, but he began, and ended, and filled up his petition with that individual supplication ; his prayer was brief, perhaps, but it was entire and earnest, and you felt that if supplication could bring down a blessing, the mourner would be comforted ! ”

“ Whatever foibles you may possess, Mr. Bryan, the want of frankness is not among them,” said Mr. Cary dryly. “ You must remember, Squire, it is easier to criticize the errors of other people, than to do the same thing well ourselves.”

“ Very true, Mr. Cary. Very true indeed, sir. I am a frank spoken man, and express myself warmly. I do not wish to be rude, sir, but I must say, I cannot conceive how a clergyman can stand in the presence of his God, cold, impassive, without even a tear in his voice, much less in his eye, bearing in his extended palm the burden of some broken heart, that has suffered and struggled, and concealed until even silence becomes insufferable, and it seeks relief upon the common bosom of humanity ; crying aloud to the good and merciful to wrestle with God in their behalf ! ”

“ You possess a very warm imagination,” said Mr. Cary, regarding the Squire with a complaisant smile. Squire Bryant’s crutch came to a sudden stand-still, and he confronted the clergyman with a look of mingled astonishment and contempt.

“ A warm imagination ! he repeated. “ Thank

God, I have at least that redeeming virtue to be sneered at! and that in these days of cant and hypocrisy I have a heart to be aroused by something. During the long years of your ministry in Minden, Mr. Cary, this poor widow has been familiar to you, and I, sir, have known her from infancy; and a brighter eye, a ruddier cheek, or more blithesome spirit never graced childhood than she possessed when she sat in the old school-house under the hill! Never shone warmer home light or home love upon locks so sunny then, but now so whitened by the frosts of her heart! She was the pet and darling of all; the first love even of many; the queen of little revelries; and when, a beautiful bride, she came forth from our rustic church, the blessings of old and young, the rich and the poor, followed the footsteps of Susie Wellman. But God has pressed to her innocent lips the bitterest of life's cups, and she has drank it to its dregs. Never has she swerved from the path of duty or rectitude, though often and again her weary feet have been pierced by the thorns. Her relatives, all of them, lie there, in our church-yard. It was your own lips that spoke solace to her heart the day she became a widow, and it was your hand, sir, that sprinkled the baptismal water upon the brow of her dying child, and pointed her to the 'Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.' From affluence and ease, from the blessed surroundings of love and plenty, she has borne her cross of heart crucifixion

down the stairway of adversity, like our Saviour, cheerfully when she could, uncomplainingly when she must. Who of us ever listened to her repinings? And who of us have not seen her, in our own hours of sorrow, hovering like an angel of mercy around our homes, forgetting her own afflictions in those of her fellow creatures?"

A faint sob fell upon the minister's ears. "Nannie is thinking of our own little lambs, who fell asleep upon the widow's breast," said the Squire with a husky voice, while his hand closed sympathetically upon the fingers of his weeping wife. "If I mistake not, Mr. Cary, you have similar reminiscences to recall in your own sad experience! Oh, how like mockery were words of consolation then! And yet, think of it, what were their sufferings, compared with those of that poor paralyzed boy, blasted at noon-day, or ours to those of that broken-hearted mother, watching, in helpless despair, the gradual decay of her idol! Think of the sweet time when she held him to breast, a laughing boy, dreaming such blissful dreams as only mothers can dream, when she should rejoice in his usefulness and exult in his manliness. When death and adversity overwhelmed her, and she seemed abandoned by God and man, you cannot have forgotten, Mr. Cary, how she clung to this one frail boy, laboring day and night for his comfort, respectability, and education! And now, after all her hopes, all her heart struggles, there

he lies, the last flower in her life's waste, blasted ! the last drop of water her parched lips sighed for, dashed to the ground ! The long night of poverty and age settling down upon her, moonless, starless ! While memory, wreathed with roses and cypress, sitting side by side with the gaunt figure of want, tells over and over the luxuries of her youth, never so coveted as now, when her dying boy moans for them in his restless anguish !

“ Why, sir, she told my wife, that night after night, ere her want was so known, she had watched by his bedside, without even the light from a penny candle, because she was afraid she should tax the kindness of her friends ! Talk of imagination ! Is it possible for one heart to compass the world of suffering this weak woman has borne silently, and alone ! A warm imagination ! Mine, Mr. Cary, shrinks back fearfully from attempting to penetrate the holiest of holies of such a temple ! and may God have mercy upon those who can rend the veil only to sneer at the burning records, written all over the charred altar of the human heart ! ”

The Squire was silent, and the three walked on, the crisped snow crackling beneath their feet, “ but not so cold,” mused he, “ as the sympathy of the selfish world, not so difficult to melt as the human ice in the bosom of our brother man ! ”

CHAPTER V.

"The primal duties shine aloft, like stars ;
The charities that soothe and heal and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of man like flowers."

THE EXCURSION.

"I give thee sixpence ! I will see thee damned first."

THE NEEDY KNIFE-GRINDER.

SHORTLY after the scene of last chapter occurred, Squire Bryan's gentle little lady went upon an excursion through a number of the village homes, upon which it may be profitable for us to go with her, as it will at least introduce us to some families in which we are not yet acquainted.

"Mrs. Hobbs," said Nannie, as she sat in the sitting room of Hobbs' house, "I am going around with a subscription for Widow Wellman, who you know is in great affliction, and I thought you would be glad to give something, so I called here the first after Mrs. Cary's. You know a paper circulates more successfully with the influential names first !"

It will be inferred that Nannie was a little diplomatist in her way !

Mrs. Hobbs made no reply ; she looked straight at her husband, and upon that hint, Nannie looked in the same direction. Mr. Hobbs, conscious of the "position," hemmed—put in a fresh quid of tobacco—crossed his legs—uncrossed them—tipped his chair back against the wall, and himself in it, crossed his limbs again, bringing his cow-skin boot exactly in a line with Nannie's face ; and after all of this manual labor, what do you guess he did ?

"Took out his wallet ?" you smilingly suggest.

Wrong, though. Mr. Hobbs, after settling himself, did nothing more or less than look at Nannie ! and Mrs. Bryan looked at Mr. Hobbs. Mr. Hobbs continued to ruminate and shift his pedal extremities for several minutes. Finally, depositing his quid in his left cheek, he inquired,

"Why can't Mrs. Wellman work, as my wife does ?" and he glanced admiringly toward the "bone of his bone."

"Them's my opinions !" ejaculated Mrs. Hobbs !

"That's what I and Miss Hobbs thinks," said the gentleman, removing his tobacco to the other side of his cheek, and evidently preparing for a set speech, which Nannie cut short by rising.

"Very well," said that small lady, "I did not call to argue you into giving. I supposed you would consider it a privilege to give in this case. The question of expecting a feeble woman like Mrs. Wellman to earn

money, fettered, as everybody knows her to be, day and night, to the bedside of her paralyzed son, is too absurd for discussion. I only hope, Mr. Hobbs, if you are ever destined to leave your wife a penniless widow, she will never have that question asked in regard to her! You know Mrs. Wellman as well as I do, and her deserts and needs. If your heart does not plead for her, no words of mine could prevail."

"I suppose folks will talk, if Miss Hobbs don't give sunthin'," said Mr. Hobbs, fidgeting in his chair; and with reluctance but too apparent, he handed Nannie what she supposed to be a quarter, but what proved to be a pistareen.

There was one other member of the Hobbs family—one known through Minden only as "little Mary"—a girl so fragile, so pure-hearted, so ethereal in person and spirit, that she might have sprung from the bosom of sleeping flowers, wooed by the passionate starlight. A sweet, pale face she had, so delicate and lovely, that the gazer looked again and again with tenderness and sorrow upon those deep introspective eyes, that seemed to be forever pleading.

"Little Mary" accompanied Mrs. Bryan to the door, and when in the passage-way, she slipped four three-cent pieces into the lady's hand.

"Mrs. Bryan," she said, "it is such a trifle I am ashamed to give it, but it is all I have in the world. Do not put it upon the paper, nor say a word about it to

anybody. It will be a ninepence more to the poor widow, and for that reason I have courage to give it."

"The little dear!" cried Mrs. Bryan enthusiastically, as she referred to the subject on a future occasion; "she is an angel! I cannot conceive how such a pearl came to be cast before such swine! It was all she had! but was that any reason why I should deprive her of the satisfaction of feeling that she had done something—all she could—for the widow? will not her young heart grow warmer, and her dreams be sweeter every night, for thinking of the little treasure she has laid up for herself in Heaven? and I could not grieve her by refusing it; but I resolved upon the instant, to give her a dozen times that amount before many days."

Nannie shook the dust of that house from her feet, and called upon Mrs. Kimball, a frank, energetic, practical woman.

"I am glad to see you going round," she said immediately; "I was tempted to start out myself, but Sara was seized with croup last week, and has been ailing ever since. What missionary wives manage to do in their fields of labor, is more than I can divine. You know I have six boys, noisy enough to have been dug out of the Franconia iron works, and what with mumps, and measles, and whooping cough, and scarlet fever, and chicken pox, the variety of aches, and that very extensive, intermittent, and always available resource, worms, I manage to labor in the medicinal treadmill

pretty effectually. Sara's forte is the croup, which invariably attacks her when I am particularly sick or tired. My husband is gone for a couple of weeks, but he got a barrel of excellent flour the day he went away, and I will send in a bag of that ;" and Mrs. Kimball called in the hired man, and despatched the donation while Nannie was there.

The house of the village doctor was the next scene of action. Dr. Baker was just home from visiting the widow's son, and was drawing off her account—Mrs. Wellman had asked for her bill. Nannie thought that "seemed very foolish in her."

"I don't think so," said Dr. Baker ; "I told her months ago I could do nothing more for her son than to render him more comfortable. If it was my own son, I should certainly consult the best medical advice in my power. It will give her satisfaction even if the effort is a failure, as I fear it must be."

When the object of the visit was announced, he receipted his bill, and passed it over.

"There," said he, "give her that for me, and the Lord do even so to her, in her hour of need," laying his hand lovingly upon his wife's head.

Mrs. Baker turned toward her husband a tearful, grateful look ; it really savored of the honeymoon ! Nannie thanked him very cordially in Mrs. Wellman's behalf.

"I have rather to thank you," he said, "for I was

designing to give it to her myself, and have avoided a scene which I always dread."

So the little lady arose to go, when the doctor said to his wife,

"Are you not designing to give something too, Mrs. Baker?"

"I thought you had been generous enough for us both," she said, smiling.

"But *I* do not," said the doctor; "it is as much of a satisfaction to you to give, as it is to me. I prefer that my wife should indulge in the luxury of charity for herself, for it is a luxury," he added, with unction!

Mrs. Baker took out her purse, and handed Nannie five dollars, saying proudly, as she did so, with perhaps the weakness of a wife, "Mr. Baker isn't like most men, Mrs. Bryan,"—Mrs. Bryan silently assented—"who insist upon doing all the alms-giving because it looks well. If there is but ten cents to go into the contribution box, he insists upon my putting in five, because, as he says, although he can give for me, he cannot feel the blessing of giving for me! And that is the truth, Mrs. Bryan, and I wish all men thought of it."

The postmaster came next. He gave five dollars for his wife, and the young clerk, Stebbins, gave two dollars for his wife.

"Why," said Nannie, "you are not married?"

"Not exactly," he said, laughing and coloring, "but I have read that all little boys have little wives some-

where in the world, that they ought to think politely of;—and though not so little, I think the idea is a good one. I insist upon subscribing for Mrs. Stebbins.”

“A nice young man, that Stebbins,” thought Nannie, as she turned her steps toward Mr. Smith’s; “his little ideal, wherever she may be, has a noble heart in store for her!”

Then she went to Mr. Smith’s! “Mercy!” said Nannie, as she entered, seeing in Smith’s hands Holmes’ Poems—“haven’t you finished that book yet? You have been reading it these five years to my remembrance!”

“I am only reviewing the Oysterman,” said Smith; “I always had a particular affection for that chap, who was taken with the cramp and drowned. Now, you see, if he had been as light-headed and hearted as I am, he would have floated high and dry, cramp or no cramp!”

When Smith became quiet, Nannie told him her errand, and that set him off again; and he enlarged somewhat censoriously, perhaps, upon Mr. Cary’s and other clergymen’s manner of praying for the poor. Nannie, however, finally fastened him.

“Well,” he said, “I have no objection to Mrs. Smith’s giving, but she is a little green-eyed—though *not* a monster—and especially jealous of widows. Now, you see, I am a little skew-eyed, and as both eyes look different ways, my wife always thinks I am looking after dimity, look which way I will; so to ease the dear

creature's mind, I have adopted *this* way of looking and walking—how do you like it, Mrs. Bryan?" and plunging both hands into his pockets, and pointing that little snub nose of his to the zenith, as straight as such a crooked little thing could be pointed at any thing, he marched off whistling, and was out of sight before Nannie discovered that his simulation of himself was only a ruse to get away. Mrs. Smith looked after him laughingly.

"Do you think Mr. Smith ugly looking?" she asked naively, turning to Nannie.

"I humbly beg your pardon, Mrs. Smith," said Nannie, "but I certainly must plead guilty."

"Well," said Mrs. Smith, looking at Nannie pleasantly, "some folks do, but he always looked handsome to me;" and Mrs. Smith gave five dollars for the subscription.

Mr. Johnson came next. Mr. Johnson was at home, of course—he always is! He was gorgeous in a royal purple dressing-gown, and crimson slippers. When Nannie named to Mrs. Johnson the purpose with which she called, Mr. Johnson said:

"Mrs. Bryan, it affords me the most unbounded satisfaction, to have the felicity of bestowing my mite upon Mistress Wellman. I have known of her for many years. I have always considered, Mrs. Bryan, that *we*, upon whom Providence has lavished its great bounty and preference, should not appropriate the glory to our-

selves, but should continually ask ourselves who it is that has made us to differ! We of ten talents should not despise the humble individual who has but *one*!”

“It is not from the gentlemen,” said Nannie, who had a horror of speeches, “that we solicit aid. The ladies flattered themselves they were to be alone in this good deed. But some of the gentlemen have insisted on giving, and I shall be happy in adding your name, if you are so disposed, Mr. Johnson.”

“It is quite the same thing,” said Johnson, loftily; “these contributions of the ladies are simple extractions from the funds of their husbands. For one, Mrs. Bryan, I always prefer to control my own resources, and very fortunately, I am blessed with an inestimable lady, who has no false notions in regard to woman’s rights!”

“Not rights, colonel,” said Mrs. Bryan, “but privileges. It is a very pleasant thing to be free agents in our charities, at least.”

The colonel gave another flourish with his hand. “My lady, the inestimable Mrs. Johnson, has too delicate perceptions of her own proper sphere, to wish to assert her independence in any way whatever! Allow me, Madam, to enlarge your charitable funds with the enclosed donation;” and he extended the silver he had been daintily wrapping up in pink tissue paper.

Nannie took the pink tissue, and rushed for the pure air! The said paper contained twenty-five cents.

“There’s nought so *mean* but may do wondrous service!”

From Mr. Noyes was received an order on his own store, of ten dollars, to be taken in groceries ; and from Mr. Rusk a similar one for two cords of wood.

Miss Dickey was next in course. Nannie did not expect much there, but she liked at least "to hear their excuses."

"Now, Miss Dickey," she said, "I have the finest chance in the world for you to cast your bread upon the water, and to realize that truthful and beautiful assertion, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

"I declare," said Miss Dickey, dropping the smile with which she had received our friend, and donning the most woe-begone expression of countenance imaginable ; "objects of charity are multiplying to such an alarming extent, that it is quite impossible to attend to so many. I have given away every rag of old clothes on the premises, and as for cold victuals, living, as David and I do, alone by ourselves, it cannot be expected I should have much to dispose of."

"Certainly not," said Nannie, "but fortunately I do not come for either ; a little money would be more desirable every way, and if I hear correctly, the gentlemen have the impression you have plenty of that."

Miss Dickey began to smile again, and Nannie proceeded to urge Mrs. Wellman's claims upon her benevolence.

"Why doesn't she present herself to the Martha

Washington Society as an object?" asked Miss Dickey. "They might as well take her as any other!"

"Very true," said Nannie, "but Mrs. Wellman cannot wait for shirts to be made and disposed of, or for socks to be knit. The truth is, she is in want now, and must be assisted immediately, or call upon the town!"

"Well, I do think that would be the wisest thing she could do," said Miss Dickey; "every town has an asylum for sick, and it seems to me much more suitable for them to avail themselves of it, than to tax private charity."

"Miss Dickey," asked the inexorable Nannie, "would you be willing to have Mrs. Wellman, who has been a kind neighbor and friend to us, all these long years, beside being a member of our own church, compelled to take that poor, helpless boy to the farm house, where the vicious and insane are all huddled together, and where neither could have the repose or food so necessary for them? Even friends would shrink from visiting them there! How faithfully, only two years since, Mrs. Wellman nursed you through that dreadful fever!"

"Certainly—but I paid her, Mrs. Bryan, all she asked."

"Paid her! As if such nursing could be paid for in dollars and cents! Even the doctor allowed that you owed your life to her unwearied devotion! You

thought, and said so, too, at the time ! I suppose two dollars a week was the full value of that debt ! ”

Nannie was becoming excited, which Miss Dickey saw, and left the room ; when she returned, she presented fifty cents, with a countenance and manner so ungracious, that the offering was rejected.

“ No, indeed,” said Nannie ; “ Mrs. Wellman shall be insulted by no such flinty charity ! it is the cheerful giver that is beloved of God ! Live long as you may, Miss Dickey, you can never repay the debt you owe her, though I beg your pardon for reminding you of it.”

Miss Dickey’s eyes flashed fire, and Nannie left her with

“ A sweet disorder in the dress,
A desperate kind of carelessness ;
A winning wave deserving note
In the tempestuous petticoat.”

CHAPTER VI.

"In this wild world the fondest and the best
Are the most tried, most troubled and distressed."—CRABBE.

DIRECTLY after tea, the indefatigable Nannie wended her way to the humble cottage of Mrs. Wellman. Small and brown, and destitute as it was of the little comforts to which the widow had so long been accustomed, it was a roof to shelter the destitute, and when endowed with the blessed title of home, seemed to the grateful, uncomplaining hearts within, a gift from God's free bounty. Always tidily kept, and its rough walls and floors garnished by such little adornments as poverty can command, it nevertheless appeared a comfortless abode to the warm-hearted wife, still mindful of the cozy and luxurious nest from which she had so recently issued.

As Nannie hastened along the single snow track, (for few are the feet that enlarge the path to the abodes of the poor,) the widow, whose sunken eye was peering into the dusky twilight, as if she found in the darkness

a companionship for her own troubled soul, espied the uncertain outline in the distance, and opened the door with the eager cordiality of one wearied with her own solitude.

"How is Edward?" asked Mrs. Bryan, after the first greetings were over.

"Sinking, I fear," said the widow, struggling to speak calmly; "he misses his cordials—his wine is all gone," she said, sighing.

"Dr. Baker tells me you have decided to change your physician?"

"Yes; not with much hope of success, but from that restless desire we all have to keep doing. My poor, poor boy!" and the widow buried her face in her hands, and sobbed as if her heart would break.

The sufferer, aroused from his partial slumber by the sobs of his mother, extended his hand feebly toward her. "It is all right, mother—it is all right!" he murmured; and after a pause, as if speaking to himself, he whispered, "whom he loveth he chasteneth!"

"He is so patient," said his mother, in a subdued, broken voice, "always so considerate of my inability to furnish him with what he needs, that it seems all the harder to have him denied."

"The Saviour had not where to lay his head," came faintly from the parched lips; "oh, my mother, trust, trust!"

With a wild, despairing impulse, the mother threw herself upon her knees by the bedside of her son.

"I have trusted, my son, until the last ray of hope is quenched by the deep waters that overwhelm us! He heareth not, though I cry unto him night and day. The waves have gone over me!"

"My mother, is his arm shortened, that he cannot save?"

"Why, then," she cried, frantically, "does he leave us to this last and most terrible struggle? Why does he lead us where our strength fails us?"

"His will be done, my mother!"

"Oh, Edward, was it for this I bore you? was it for this we have struggled through our long night of adversity? When have you not denied yourself to minister to my comfort? And now, when you lie here, helpless and suffering, before my eyes"—

Mrs. Bryan laid her hand softly upon her shoulder.

"My dear friend, have you forgotten how Abraham was tempted? yet his faith prevailed!"

"Did he see the son, a thousand times dearer than his own life, linger month after month upon the verge of the grave, as I see mine, without the power to command the means of salvation? The soul strengthens itself for trials like his—but my heart is broken by long suffering, and I could well-nigh curse God and die!"

A low moan of anguish burst from the lips of Ed-

ward, and smote with reproachings the heart of the kneeling mother.

"May God forgive me," she said; "never till this day have I known despair."

"Was it right so to distrust your friends?" asked Mrs. Bryan, reproachfully. "Why did not you come to us?"

"And so I would; but last night, when wood and candles were both gone, and I asked Edward if he could stop a little by himself, he looked so earnestly in my face, and said, 'Mother, don't beg—not even for me!' 'But I cannot see your face,' I cried. 'No matter,' he said, 'with the holy starlight, and your warm heart beating near me, it cannot be dark or cold!' And so, with my arms around him, and his face pressed to mine, as we used to slumber in his infancy, he prayed and slept."

The arm of Nannie embraced her.

"Look up, poor, stricken heart, and behold the signs of promise; for the rainbow is spanning even this darkest of clouds."

It was the tone of exultation, rather than the words of Mrs. Bryan, that met the ear of the sufferer. For the first time, Edward became conscious of her presence. He smiled his welcome, and motioned to her to take his hand. His eye fell upon the familiar carpet-bag.

"What have you brought me to-night?" he asked,

feebly, but with a look of childish delight, for he knew his visitor never came empty-handed.

Who that has ever brought to the fainting invalid a luxury, but has recalled that gleam of gratitude, long years after the speaking eye has been sealed in death? How gratefully he smiled his recognition of favorite delicacies—the box of fresh figs—the lemons—and little jars of home-made jellies—and lastly, the generous wine, and the loaf of bread, which, under Nannie's skilful fingers, always became so wondrously white and dainty.

The tearful, but smiling eyes of Edward, sought the face of his mother, as with a low, tremulous voice, he repeated those exquisite lines of Cowper—

“ Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace ;
Behind a frowning Providence,
He hides a smiling face ! ”

“ Sinner that I am,” cried the penitent widow, raising her clasped hands and streaming eyes to heaven, “ lay not this great sin to my charge ! Henceforth, though thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee ! ”

“ But oh, Mrs. Bryan, as I lay there last night, with Edward's hot palm pressed to mine, looking up into the heavens so radiant with God's workmanship, his very glory seemed to taunt me with my nothingness—the moonlight mocked me with its cold, calm light ; and in heaven, or upon earth, no voice answered to my great

agony ! Sinner that I was and am ! His mercy smites me like a rod ! ”

It was then that Nannie, with her kind heart all aglow, revealed to these afflicted sufferers the messages of which she was bearer. “ I met Mr. Rusk this afternoon, and he wished me to hand you this order, as an earnest that he would send you two cords of wood at any time you might desire.”

Mrs. Wellman took the paper, and burst into a flood of tears.

“ And Mr. Noyes, who has never forgotten your kindness to his children, when they were so sick last summer, sent his order, also, for some groceries, which he hoped might not come amiss, now that Edward was sick himself. Ten dollars ! And, Mrs. Wellman, you have always been so kind and sympathetic towards us all when we have been in affliction, and Edward, too, was always doing little favors for the whole neighborhood, that we felt as if we must be allowed to make you some useful present, now that you are in the same kind of trouble yourself. We hardly knew what you wanted most, so we made up a little purse, thinking you could use the money to better advantage for yourself than we could for you. Do not feel the least delicacy in appropriating it, for we shall always remain in your debt, even were it a hundred times more than it is. The purse will at least express the sincerity of our

affection for you, and as such, we know you will not refuse it."

With the cry of one exhausted with excitement, and hysterical with sudden joy, the widow threw herself upon her knees, upon the very spot where she had so recently moaned out her despair, and with quivering lips, poured forth a petition of such utter abandonment, that Nannie flung herself by her side, and sobbed aloud in her full-souled sympathy.

The earnest faith of the invalid was unmoved by the blessing, as it had been by the gathering storm—and his voice grew clearer and stronger, as he cried, exultingly, "It is the Lord's work, and it is marvellous in our eyes!"

CHAPTER VII.

"I allow your tongue free license
On all my other faults ; but on your life
No word of Cleopatra."—ALL FOR LOVE.

LEAVING Mrs. Wellman and her son to enjoy all the surprise and gratitude, and earnest thanksgiving excited by Mrs. Bryan's Christian visit, we turn our steps again toward the little white cottage of the parsonage.

The firelight gleams out invitingly through the muslin curtains, and as we catch glimpses of the group within, we loiter at the window to muse over and enjoy the domestic tableau. Mr. Cary is sitting in his arm-chair, with an open manuscript in his hand, from which he has apparently been reading. Mrs. Cary, for any appearances to the contrary, may have been occupying her sewing-chair since the first evening we made her acquaintance. The same gown of dark stuff—the same plain, white collar—the hair so perfectly arranged—the same placid countenance—even the hearth seems to have remained unlittered—the brasses to have been untarnished. The knitting, too, lies upon the table, while

the form of little Lucy, in the graceful repose of childhood, half in shadow, and half in the bright, warm hearth light, forms a pretty picture in the space between the chairs of the two. Lucy's head, true to the instincts of nature, seeks the mother's lap, while the soft, silken curls steal out from beneath the caressing hand of the mother, and glimmer upon the dark cloth, like ripples of water kissed by the silvery moonlight.

The eyes of the clergyman were taking in this charming home scene; but true to the one idea that had so completely absorbed the man, had transformed the sleeping innocent into a poor, benighted slave-girl, kneeling for mercy at the feet of her cruel mistress. Mrs. Cary, on the contrary, having listened attentively to her husband's discourse for the ensuing Sabbath, was seriously revolving in her mind the probable results attendant upon its delivery, and enjoying, as far as her hopeful nature would allow, the "dark delight" of anticipated evil.

"Mr. Cary," she said at length, respectfully, and half timidly, "I can see no possible good resulting from such a sermon as that. Of late, you have spoken most fully upon the subject of slavery, and you know very well how those sermons have been received. If it is your duty, as you think, to define your own position, and give your reasons for doing so, you have already committed yourself in a manner which allows of no misconception, and it does seem to me that those dis-

courses are sufficient. Where is the necessity of irritating our people with arguments which most of them understand as well as you do ? ”

Had a bomb exploded in the auricular chambers of the reverend gentleman's caput, it is uncertain whether then his dignity could have been more effectually routed, than when Mrs. Cary, his own wife, presumed to question the justice and perfection of Mr. Cary's decisions ! His thick, heavy eyebrows curled themselves into such an elevated arch of astonishment—his eyes darted forth such midnight blackness—and his whole figure dilated with such indignation, that we greatly doubt Mrs. Cary's ability to have resumed the thread of her discourse, had not her own gaze, either evasively or absorbedly, been fixed upon the superior polish of those brass andirons ! Such being the case, in innocent unconsciousness of the sublimity of the elements opposite her, she went on :

“ For ten years our little church has been increasing in numbers, and gathering strength from the character and wealth of its members. We have had none of those dissensions too often found in churches—we have had no cases of dismissal—and the people of Minden have invariably manifested the kindest and most affectionate disposition toward us. During the last year the state of religion has been unusually interesting ; our evening meetings have been fully attended, and our seasons for private conversations more frequented than

ever before since we came here. Several of our young people have seemed quite seriously minded, and some of them almost persuaded to be Christians!

"Now, Mr. Cary, allow me to ask, if in this state of things, it is desirable to bring forward abolitionism, which has proved so fatal everywhere to the welfare of the churches? knowing as we do that attention will be averted from the great cause of Christ's kingdom—unkind feelings be engendered—inquirers will drop off—church members secede, and before two years I venture to predict you will stand a sad spectator of the spoils your own hands have wrought in God's vineyard!"

"Mrs. Cary," exclaimed the now exasperated clergyman, "do you suppose a minister of the Gospel should, for a moment, be influenced in his own perceptions of duty by the effect that will be produced?"

"But a minister is as liable to be misled by his passions and prejudices as the rest of mankind! Can it be the duty of a clergyman to repeat what experience everywhere proves to have resulted in evil?"

"I tell you," shouted Mr. Cary, "the people are asleep in this great cause of equality and freedom. They have forgotten, or closed their eyes to the solemn fact that millions of our brethren, as good by nature as we are, and far better by practice, are at this hour extending their manacled hands toward the North, and uttering the Macedonian cry, 'Come over and help us!' This great national sin is hanging like a millstone round

our necks, accumulating vengeance every day of our lethargy ; and who, I ask, shall cry aloud upon the walls of Zion, and sound the tocsin of alarm, but we, who are set as the watchmen upon the towers thereof? It is not for us, the prophets of the Most High, to sleep on 'flowery beds of ease,' while this portion of our brethren are perishing daily in worse than heathenish darkness before our eyes ! ”

“ My dear,”
said Mrs. Cary,
“ I do not question the wants of this portion of the unsanctified. But is the soul of a black more valuable than that of a white, that you are ready to purchase its redemption by such fearful sacrifices of your own people? Has not God, by



placing you in Minden, and blessing your labors here, indicated his purpose that here should be your field of action, and that for these people you should exert faith-

fully what talent and usefulness he has been pleased to bestow upon you? Have you a right, before God, to sacrifice their interests to this new zeal for a people who do not and never can come under the influence of your preaching—whose masters, even, will never know that such a man as Mr. Cary of Minden village ever lived, moved, or had his being? You can sacrifice your people here, to be sure—a people for whom some minister must labor! If you forsake them, who will gather up the scattered flock? So long as the unconverted and the inquiring meet you at every step, how can you feel it duty not only to waste Sabbath after Sabbath in preaching upon subjects foreign to the great theme of salvation, but by diverting their attention, and irritating their personal prejudices, drive them from church, and harden their hearts with bitterness and rancor? You will destroy your own usefulness, and ultimately the vital piety of your people!”

“You reason like a woman,” returned Mr. Cary, with what was intended to be a tone of dignified rebuke, but which to our unsophisticated ears resembled rather the accent of dogged sullenness. “We clergymen profess the great principle of equality and freedom to be included in the plan of salvation, and to be a part of the Gospel we are called to proclaim. All national sins are local sins, inasmuch as the sins of individuals make up the sins of the masses: to put down sin wherever and in whatsoever guise it exists is our mis-

sion. Whoever at the North sanctions or even regards with indifference the existence of slavery at the South, is as culpable before God of that sin as if he actually bartered in human flesh. 'He that is not for me is against me.'

"It is by agitating the subject of slavery at the North, that the South will be brought to reflect upon the heinousness of their traffic—'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.' It is not to be expected the South will throw away their slave property of their own free will. The drowning man clings not unfrequently to his gold, until the weight of it seals his doom! It is human nature to prefer wealth to principle; and the South will cling to slavery so long as it is for the interests of their purses. The reform, therefore, must commence at the North, among those who have no interest in the manual labor of the slave—who can analyze its good and evil deliberately, and like a good physician probe the wound freely, that in time it be healed."

"Mr. Cary, you forget that this subject so newly agitated by you, is an old, well-tested experiment abroad. The wound has been probed, and the physicians are abundant everywhere, who stand, probe in hand, itching to lay the cruel hurt open to the very bone. For years they have been longing to cut the throats of their Southern brethren in cold blood—to tear down our national flag—dissever the Union, and all under the hypo-

critical pretence of removing their own self-righteousness as far as possible from these sinful Sadducees. Never were words more applicable than those of our Saviour! 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness! Why, if our philanthropists so thirst for the suppression of evil, do they not bestir themselves in the thousand and one reforms demanded in the North, and which affect our present and eternal welfare quite as much as this question of Southern sin! It seems to me, that instead of inflammatory speeches delivered behind people's backs—instead of stealing and secreting their property, to prove that they have no right to it—instead of sending hot-headed, half-educated, addled-brained Yankees to stir up strife, and instruct the blacks how to murder their masters and raise insurrection, they would do better to cast out the devils that seem to have taken such entire possession of themselves. It has always been admitted, even by Northern men, that we are the severest of taskmasters, and soonest yield to the seductions of slavery, when Southernized. I have no doubt some of our Northern shriekers are sincere; but the greater portion, I honestly believe, are more tyrannical in their own homes than half of the slaveholders. There is Job Lane, who is shrieking for liberty at every corner! It was only a week ago that he was breathing out ven-

geance against tyranny, when David Dickey came toward him, and laying his hand upon his shoulder, asked, 'Who are you? It strikes me you are the very man who is notorious for beating his wife every week.' Job lowered his sails, and was out of sight some time before his listeners had finished cheering! We have Northern slavery, too, if nothing but slavery is adapted to the talent of these reformers."

"Mrs. Cary," cried her husband, groaning out his horror of her degeneracy, "you forget yourself. You remember what St. Pau—" But here the gentleman hesitated, not unmindful of Madam's previous comment upon the Apostle, and the private application which he did not care to have repeated. "Your zeal is not according to knowledge! For one, I do not understand what you mean by Northern slavery; please illustrate!"

"Well, then, there is Mrs. Brown, just across the way. Now I will defy you to name a single act in which that woman is a free agent; and yet Mr. Brown is one of our own church members, and what is called an honest, intelligent citizen; but he keeps his tyrannical heel upon that woman, as if she were a scorpion! She has told me repeatedly, that since the moment she married Mr. Brown, she has been fettered day and night. Her domestic arrangements are all made subservient to Mr. Brown's inclinations; she can neither leave home nor receive friends, without first obtaining his permission. If a new bonnet or dress is needed, it must be purchased

by Mr. Brown personally, and when it suits that gentleman's convenience. As for money, she told me not a month since, that if every odd cent she had possessed since her marriage was added, she had never been the possessor of two dollars ; and that often she had been obliged to resort to all kinds of subterfuges to conceal the pecuniary manners of her husband, when she had been solicited to contribute to charitable objects. She is never allowed to sell her butter or cheese or eggs, or any of the farm produce that replenishes the purse of the farmer's wife ; and yet, sick or well, she must stand at her post in the kitchen, the dairy—as the mother of eight children, and the mistress of his house—and last, but not least, the eternal drudge of Mr. Brown himself, who, however blind he might have been before marriage to her imperfections, is a conjugal Argus, which your favorite St. Paul might safely call ‘ a thorn in the flesh.’ And now, what is her reward for this connubial servitude ? She is graciously permitted to eat her stinted and homely fare from Mr. Brown's deal table ; to shelter her head beneath his crazy old farm roof ; and to be called Mrs. Brown ! and it is my humble opinion that this very upright and model husband would curtail even these advantages if he had the ability ! ”

“ Ma-ri-ah, my dear,” broke in Mr. Cary, with sepulchral solemnity.

“ Don't Mariah me,” cried the lady, who well knew that when her husband wished to be perfectly annihilat-

ing, he resorted to her Christian appellation ! “ Please hear me out. It is possible Mrs. Brown’s is an extreme case, but I think not an uncommon one. Men of independence and even affluence, do not hesitate to exercise this ungenerous and oppressive vigilance, and many an active, high-spirited girl degenerates into a hackneyed, hum-drum housekeeper, who, with suitable encouragements for indulging her laudable ambition, would have made her home a paradise, and her husband a wiser and happier man.”

“ A little tainted with ‘ woman’s rights,’ ” sneered the clergyman !

“ Most emphatically, no ; but it has occurred to me that God created woman for some higher and nobler purpose, than to administer to the animal wants of Adam ! I remember, even now, a frail, sensitive creature, who could never inure herself to the rough fetters of her Northern home. ‘ Are you not well fed ? ’ asked her practical husband. ‘ Oh, yes.’ ‘ Are you not suitably clothed ? ’ ‘ Oh, yes.’ ‘ Then, what more can you possibly ask for ? ’ growled her owner ! She was the most perfect of housekeepers—the fondest of mothers—the most faithful of wives—and yet she drooped, and stole silently away to the spirit land. The soul smiled even in death, and most beautiful we thought her, as we strewed the chilled clay with flowers, and folded her small hands upon the symbol of her faith. A few said, she had drooped for the inner sunshine and dew which

some natures so yearn after ; but her husband, who had clothed and fed her, and the world, too, said she had died of consumption. So with the proceeds of domestic economy he purchased her a handsome marble, and upon it wrote his own eulogy ! He went into becoming mourning—became bland and youthful, and a few months after married a buxom, showy lass, who made butter and cheese, pudding and pies, and is lauded by her husband as a model woman.

“ I do not know,” said Mrs. Cary, musingly, “ which is the most to be dreaded, domestic or national bondage ; both are bad enough, certainly. Let us not overlook the evils of the one in our misguided zeal for the other ! ”

Mrs. Cary stooped to raise the manuscript, which had fallen from her husband’s hand, and glancing at his face, had the mortification of perceiving that Somnus had strewn him with poppies, and borne him to the land of Nod !

The look of surprised vexation with which this discovery was made, yielded to a comic smile of good humor, as placing the manuscript upon the table, Mrs. Cary resumed her knitting, gazing with half-shut eyes upon the dying embers, and yielding the reins to fancy, plunged into the shadowy realms of the past and future.

CHAPTER VIII.

Teaching that all opinion is but vanity.—MENANDER.

THE Sabbath following the somniferous argument of our good dame of the parsonage, found Mr. Cary armed and equipped according to the requirements of the abolition law, gnashing his teeth at the slaveholder, hinting at swords and pistols, hurling thunderbolts at the stars and stripes, and even shaking his own two corporeal fists in the very face and eyes of our Union!

Squire Bryan deluded, by the late charitable discourse into the belief that Mr. Cary, having said his say, was returning to his good old church-going ways, and being in a quizzical complaisant mood, laid his lame foot upon the cushion, and making himself generally comfortable, proceeded to listen with the most devout and undivided attention. Now, as Squire Bryan was the "Washington Potts" of Minden village, the mere fact that he chose to listen was sufficient of itself to secure the attention of a large portion of the audience.

We do not propose giving even the outline of Mr. Cary's discourse. Such sermons have rung from our pulpits, until every sensible man and woman too, has turned away heart-sick from the house of God. The congregation dispersed silently, and more than one individual as he passed through the church-door, registered a vow never to enter its portals again, so long as the pastor chose to prostitute his sacred desk to the dissemination of such practical falsehood.

"We have political meetings enough," said young Stebbins, "without paying our ministers to preach politics. I went to church with a real desire to hear and get good, but see, how vexed I am! One had better stay at home than feel so," and young Stebbins never entered the church again. As for Squire Bryan, he went home, lighted his Havana, assumed that elevated position men find so congenial to pedal comfort, and closing his eyes communed with his own heart and was still.

The next day, however, the Squire was at his office window, and, as Mr. Cary made his daily call at the Post, the window was raised, and the Squire's sonorous voice was heard inviting the reverend gentleman to enter.

"Mr. Cary," he said, "it is time for you and I to understand each other. I have always regarded you as an honest and upright man, have respected your good sound common sense, and relied upon you both

as my temporal and spiritual guide. As for the last, God knows, I have great need of one. Business men, like myself, plunged all the week in turmoil and strife, and looking only upon the darkest phases of humanity, regard the Sabbath with an affection that persons with common cares can never experience. You know, sir, that I have always been a regular and attentive listener, though I make no professions as a Christian; still, I remember a few halcyon days, far back in my boyhood, when a few of us thought we 'indulged hope,' and held our little prayer-meetings in the pine woods around the old school-house. It was a delusion, no doubt, but I very often, even at this late day, find myself singing over our hymns with something of the old feeling.' Here the Squire paused, drummed musingly upon the table with his finger tips, and whistled softly, a part of the sweet old tune "The Bower of Prayer."

"But I beg your pardon, Mr. Cary," he said, arousing himself from dream-land, with a quick motion of the head. "As I was saying, the Sabbath is dear to me as a season of repose, both mental and spiritual, if it can be allowed to such as me to speak of spirituality, and I cannot see you converting its sacred hours into political capital without real pain and regret."

"Squire Bryan," said Mr. Cary, "I am sensible you have taken offence at my discourses upon the subject of slavery, nor are you the only person of my congre-

gation ; yet, as your influence is more extensive than many others, it is perhaps more to be regretted."

"Mr. Cary, I presume our views upon the real nature and influence of slavery are exceedingly similar. But this I do know, that no clergyman is called of God to make stump speeches in his desk ; and I, for one, enter my protest against such sermons as you have chosen to present for our consideration these few Sabbaths past. And if you persist in forcing upon us such sentiments as these, I tell you, once for all, you will be responsible for more evil and more sin, than you can ever atone for, if you live to the age of Methusaleh !"

"How can truth be productive of sin?" asked Mr. Cary.

"Truth in its purity, kindly and considerately presented, will always be, if not attractive, at least palatable. There are many things beside abolitionism that may have truth for its basis, that are equally unsuited to Sabbath day discussion," returned the Squire.

"I always supposed a clergyman had a right to preach as his conscience dictated," said Mr. Cary.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Cary. If your conscience dictated to you to give us a lecture upon Taste or Music, you have no right to avail yourself of the Sabbath day for that purpose! 'Will ye rob God?' We have but one Sabbath in the week ; we certainly have need of all the good advice and godly counsel you can give us during the three hours you devote to us, to the

entire exclusion of all collateral topics. The subject of Temperance is certainly more closely connected with our moral reform, and Intemperance brings with it vastly greater evils than slavery ever can, and yet, you would not feel it duty, nor would you justify yourself in presenting that subject to us during the Sabbath day. It is not three months since you declined addressing us upon Temperance during Sabbath evening, although everywhere else, so far as I am informed, such meetings are approved. Now, sir, the facts are these:—The clergy have made slavery a perfect hobby. With a few honorable exceptions they have joined forces, pledging to sustain each other. They presume upon the sacredness of their profession, and the confidence and prejudices of the people, to take such liberties with the church as they please. At first, the good old puritanic blood was triumphant! Who dared question the clergy? If a voice from the crowd uttered its indignation, the Plymouth rock groaned to its centre, and cries of sacrilege and blasphemy resounded upon all sides! But the clergy have carried this thing too far.—Their own imprudence has rent the veil asunder, and the people are reasoning for themselves! They weary of this eternal harping upon the nigger-string! There is no discretion discernible in the blind infatuation with which at all times and all seasons this one idea is shaken in our faces! Now, I tell you what it is, Mr. Cary, you may preach these discourses to your heart's

content, but as for me or my house sitting under the droppings of any such degenerated sanctuary, you will see me damned first!"

"Squire Bryan," said Mr. Cary, gathering himself up with slow dignity, "you forget yourself!"

The Squire smiled bitterly. "Perhaps," he said, "that does savor of profanity, and yet, it very much resembles one of your own expressions, in your last Sabbath's discourse! Did I not understand you to say, Mr. Cary," continued the Squire, "that if you ever flinched from this great work of emancipation, you prayed God to smite you in his just displeasure, and banish you from His pure presence, forever? I think those were your very words. Where is the difference save in our method of expressing ourselves? I am simply the most honest. Without mincing the matter, there is a vast deal of polite profanity issuing from our pulpits, which falls very jarringly upon the ears of the world! It is high time for the Pulpit to be purged from some of its abominations, or I venture to predict an era of religious death more fatal to America, than the darkest days of infidelity to France."

Mr. Cary was silent.

"You say, Mr. Cary, that you have a right to preach upon slavery and all other topics, which appear to you to be in the path of duty! Now, sir, I wish to suggest this with proper respect and delicacy. You are a hired servant of the people, hired and paid to per-

form a given duty, viz., to preach the Gospel of Christ ; to visit and comfort our sick ; and promote, to the utmost of your ability, our spiritual interests ! You understand what we consider to be the Gospel, as taught by Christ. You know, that it is to preach this Gospel as we understand that word, that you are hired and paid, and that it is the kind of religion our humanity requires at your hands. Now, by what right do you pocket our money and deprive us of the thing bargained for ? If I hire a man to cut hay for me, and his inclination induces him to cut wood instead, would he be considered a faithful servant ? Would you consider it any excuse for him to say he felt it his duty to cut wood ? No, sir, you would say emphatically, I know my own wants best, I engaged you to make hay, and it is hay you must cut. How many of our clergy, Mr. Cary, who are so zealous for the reform of our great national sins, would feel it their duty to sacrifice their churches in this manner, if their salaries were not promptly paid them ? Sir, I have no faith in this great hue and cry of duty ! I have no respect for the man who opposes his will to the common sense of the people. We know what our religious wants are better than you can tell us, but we grope blindly for the pearl of great price, and the wail of sinful despair is going up everywhere, 'What shall we do to be saved ?' Instead of going forth like good shepherds, and searching for the lost sheep which have fallen into the pit, and laying them

in your bosoms, and bringing them tenderly into the sheep-fold, what do you do? You carry dissension and rebellion among the little flocks grazing so peacefully in the green pastures and beside the still waters! You render their food bitter and unpalatable, until they break from their enclosures, and wander up and down in strange places, seeking for the food that satisfies the natural cravings of their souls! They hear the voices of strange shepherds and they learn to be called by their names, and to follow after them, and when at length the sheep-cot is deserted, you fold your hands complacently, taunt the broken flock with the wondrous depravity of their natures, and wash the blood of their destruction from your skirts!"

Still Mr. Cary was silent, his involuntary motions alone indicating his susceptibility.

"Occasionally," resumed the Squire after a pause, "I have fancied you alluded to myself in your remarks. Especially when speaking of the election of certain men to public office. Men, whose positions, in regard to the reforms of the day, were not fully defined and understood! The people generally, understood such to be your reference, and I wish to ask you directly, whether that inference was correct!"

"I cannot be held accountable for all people infer, Squire Bryan. You know the old adage, 'let him whom the coat fits, put it on.'"

"You should be above such subterfuges, Mr. Cary! I desire you to answer yes or no!"

Mr. Cary gave his chair a little hitch toward the table, and twirled his pencil with some embarrassment, but said with apparent candor:

"Squire Bryan, why should you suppose I referred to yourself particularly? Is not the world full of political men, exerting all their influence in direct opposition to the great interests of our national prosperity? Men, destitute of principle, figuring simply for their own success and individual promotion?"

"Mr. Cary, I ask you again, did you, or did you not think of me personally in connection with your remarks? Will you please answer me without equivocation or mental reservation?"

Mr. Cary was silent.

"Yes, or no!" thundered the Squire.

"Squire Bryan," said Mr. Cary, blandly, "I should be sorry to have any unpleasant feelings or unkind words pass between us. Allow me to wish you a good afternoon," and Mr. Cary taking his hat, moved toward the door.

"Mr. Cary," said the Squire passionately, placing himself before the door, and facing that gentleman, with a right-about movement, "I am a plain spoken man, and I despise evasion wherever it is found! Know, sir, that in one and all of my elections, I have never once canvassed for success. Never has a dime

left my hand or pocket for bribery, or parlance ; and, God knows as I have not paid others to fight for me, I will not pay a minister to fight against me in the pulpit. This day, and this hour closes all social intercourse between the Reverend Mr. Cary and Horace Bryan. Whoever sets himself up as my spiritual guide, shall at least be man enough in courage to meet his assertions face to face with the man he attacks, and the gentleman who is my friend, shall know how to answer yes or no, without trusting to his cloth to protect him from being called to an honest account for both deeds, and words !” Squire Bryan opened the door to its widest extent, inviting the gentleman by a motion of his hand, to avail himself of free passage ; but Mr. Cary hesitated upon the threshold, and holding his hat in one hand extended the other amicably toward the indignant Squire.

“No, sir,” cried the Squire, drawing himself up with dignity, “the foe who honestly opposes me in the broad glare of day, I have always respected ; but the hand that seeks to wound me covertly, and the lips that betray with a kiss, are more to be loathed than the slimy trail of the serpent !”

CHAPTER IX.

"Whose names shall be a portion in the batch
Of the heroic dough that baking Time
Kneads for consuming ages."—MONODY ON SAM PATCH.

THE political excitement, which for months had been gathering strength and intensity all over the country, as the party candidates for the presidency had elucidated their platforms, and eaten their "hasty plates of soup" with a secretary at their elbows, approached our remote village of Minden with great tardiness.

The inhabitants who wanted but "little here below," had vegetated with quiet stolidity; the knowledge of luxuries even being confined to a few individuals whom business called to the cities, or such as were inoculated by summer visits from fashionable cousins, who are especially prone to remember their poor relations during the dog-days! So the good people quaffed their mugs of old cider, on great occasions indulged in a glass of currant wine—smoked their old-fashioned clay pipes—kept aloof from stimulants—and were, or fancied they were, as well to do in the world as their neighbors.

But even the sleep of the Ephesian sisters ended ; and so, alas ! did the repose of Minden ! Its peaked mountains and shaggy pines—its terrific boulders of granite, and interminable stage-roads could not shield it from those political nuisances who pry into every inhabitable nook and corner where a poor voter has taken refuge ; hunting him up and smoking him out with an assiduousness more indomitable than was manifested by Putnam in his famous attack upon the wolves !



Would-be-orators, sighing for Ciceronic laurels, like Rachel weeping for her children, lifted up their maiden

voices and mourned over the wrongs of their injured country ! They sighed and groaned. They threw their hands before, and their coat-tails behind, presenting to the astonished and gaping crowd the fac-simile of a victim of Asiatic cholera ! Men who had grown old and gray-haired, rejoicing as did Sam Slick in " this glorious and enlightened republic," grew pale at the imminent peril of the Union ! while young men, who in their boyhood had been whipped into small recollections of revolutionary dates and struggles, and had sighed for the balmy hour to arrive when they too could " strut their brief hour upon the village green " in white breeches and an epaulette, grew faint-hearted as the speaker smote his knuckles together and pummelled his hands to jelly, by way of illustrating the terrific crash of the political spheres ! while to the vision of one and all, the dear little valley of Minden lay stretched out, a second Wyoming, all stark and gory, the men marching in single file to execution, over the cold corpses of scalped matrons and maidens !

At the close of these interesting performances, while the honest-hearted inhabitants went home to weep by their firesides, so soon to be whelmed in the universal crash of the republic ; our exhausted orators retired to the private room of the hotel, to grow jubilant over whiskey skins, and wash down their griefs for their guillotined country with choice brands of Madeira !

Gradually a few private clubs were formed for the

furtherance of political successes. Champagnes were inadequate to "keep the spirits up," and occasionally brandy was used as a substitute. Politics grew stale; whist and billiards were a relief, and small stakes added



to the excitement. The hours for dispersion grew later and later, until they extended into the "wee-sma'-hours," when young men "led each other home," "baying at the moon;" and married men with families, to whom they should have been "a great ensample," forgetful of the moral contained in the inimitable Tam-o'-Shanter,

returned misty-eyed in the gray morn, only to grow sober, and alive to their revel's head-ache, to the music of a conjugal Caudle!

Delightful little bits of village gossip filled the atmosphere like thistle-down! Reputations exploded like fulminating powder! Hearts, which for years had been twining in true-love knots, burst asunder, and dear little Cupid, maimed and crippled, was borne insensible from the field!

Husbands and wives who had tottered "together" up hill and down—who had "my-dear'd" each other in public, and sat hand in hand, that the artist might perpetuate their love with their beauty, now stalked at antipodes, and bolted their food with the sullenness of boa-constrictors!

Corpulent and feeble men, who, when within doors, found it impossible to stoop for a pair of slippers, trudged through mud and sleet in torch-light processions, until chilblains and rheumatism "gave them Jesse," and not even the intimation of the Leaders that it was time to "hooray," could keep alive their amor patri without frequent libations of water (and brandy)!

No wonder, then, that with Satan laboring so zealously for the world's people, and Mr. Cary so undevotedly for the church, that between the two, the morals and religion of our pet village should have rapidly declined. The inquiry meetings were deserted by such young men as found politics enough at their clubs, and

from refusing to attend church they came to neglect every thing of a religious character. Professors grew lukewarm and negligent, and by and by, Mr. Cary preached to children and women, his deacons, and such of his male hearers as coincided with his opinions, or whose apathy rendered them indifferent to his isms.

Mrs. Cary mourned sometimes to her spouse, but oftener to herself, as she saw her own gloomy prophecies so rapidly fulfilled ; while her husband, wedded to his unyielding stubbornness of purpose, knew no relenting, nor would he, had he seen that whole church mangled and bleeding at his feet. He, the reverend Mr. Cary, was infallible, as the truth whose exponent he professed to have become !

It was surprising with what rapidity the parishioners became conversant with Mr. Cary's whole history. Although his reputation had remained so spotless during his sojourn in Minden, it was now suddenly revealed that even the best of men have their foibles, and that Mr. Cary was "no better than he should be."

We doubt whether adversity contains a finer or more impressive chapter, than the one we read so tearfully and with burning cheeks, every word of which burns into our hearts like molten iron, revealing to us that when the dark hours of our life lower around us, and we sway in the tempest like broken reeds, clutching at the hands that have caressed us to break our fall, those very fingers wrench away the frantic grasp, and hurl

us with greater precipitancy into the vortex of our despair !

How seldom a bold, manly spirit comes to the rescue of a brother's mangled reputation, and looking the world in the face, laughs its petty malice to scorn ! Secretly the deadly virus circulates in society, until the entire community is inoculated, and the victim stands aghast to find himself shunned like the Upas ! Friends whom he would have sworn were true,

“ Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer ! ”

CHAPTER X.

“And in that day seven women shall take hold upon one man.”—ISAIAH.

THE ladies of Minden, whose tender hearts had been more particularly touched through the appeals of Mr. Cary on behalf of those fellow beings whose only fault was their color, now thought it time that they should “take a position,” and a meeting was called, which was understood to be preliminary to the formation of a “CAREAN AFRICAN AID SOCIETY.”

This meeting was held at the house of Miss Dickey, the prime mover—a person of whom the reader only knows through a brief interview with our friend Nannie. It is due to her position, and the dignity of this history, that she should be now regularly introduced.

Every village boasts its *bas-bleu* ; a character as essential to its completeness as that of the Physician and the Lawyer ! Miss Dickey was one of those sentimental demi-intellectual personages, who seem to have been born with a book in their hand, and to have been predestined from the cradle to become at the very least the

"school ma'am" of the township! At twelve years she had experienced the pangs of "first love," and during the entire period of the "teens" had run such a heart gauntlet that at twenty that organ was as callous and impervious to the arrows of Cupid, as the skin of an alligator to the shafts of his pursuer! Like all such precocious phenomena, she had been old at fifteen, young at thirty-five; in which autumnal splendor we present her to our readers. After the marriage of her brothers and elder sisters, and the death of her parents, which last event had left her an orphan at the tender age of twenty-five, and an annuity which made her quite the heiress of Minden, she had retired from public instruction, confining her efforts to "classes" and select schools, whither the young ladies resorted, "with two towels and a spoon!"

These she instructed in all sorts of absurdities: to read "*la langue Française*"—to convert innocent little birds and lambs into monstrosities, and to embroider

"Their woe on satin,
The graves in green, the grass in black,
The epitaphs in Latin!"

Miss Dickey was given to a variety of charming personal conceits. She never could believe that the admiring glances directed toward the windows and church pews could possibly be designed for any but herself. She never failed to acknowledge the serenades, and carry in her pocket with extreme tenderness the

poetical raptures with which some consuming swain had relieved his passion, and left anonymously at the gate of his charmer. The strange and irresistible youth,



and slashing chariot, that she expected to see at any moment drive up to her door and bear her off, regardless of her cries and the village wonder, to some far, strange castle, is unimaginable.

She was the confidant of all

distraught lovers, and wrote an immense number of rhyming love-letters for such as possessed small lingual developments! From time immemorial she had revelled in "scenes" and "costumes" and "original theatricals." She composed dialogues and dramas for the young people, invariably playing the part of the heroine herself, especially if she was supposed to be youthful and despairing! Our heroine possessed also an intense passion for "tangled dells" and "sleepy hollows," haunted houses and old ruins, and if they were not infested with myths and hobgoblins it was no fault of

Miss Dickey's, who was never weary of roving around them by moonlight, much to the annoyance of her pupil-lovers, who had stolen out through the windows to exchange vows with their village worshippers:

Of late years Miss Dickey had grown weary of bright eyes and blushing cheeks, and had lavished her affections upon the animal kingdom, which certainly was more susceptible to her attractions. Indeed, her domicile was a kind of stationary menagerie, where goats, dogs, cats, rabbits, parrots, birds and domestic fowls congregated, each rejoicing in the most euphonious of cognomens; and if Miss Dickey's eulogiums were to be considered orthodox, the most remarkable of their species! The goat from his valor had been christened the Duke of Wellington; the greyhound was known as "Lord Mortimer;" the cat was called Euphemia; the rabbits were affecting remembrancers of Cowper's pet "hares;" while the canaries were a host of "artists," of whose names we frankly confess ourselves ignorant.

Although an "orphan," as Miss Dickey always tearfully called herself, it will be seen that she was by no means the lorn woman she might have been! Living as she did in the "bosom of her interesting family," and devoting herself intently to its interests, Miss Dickey's humanity might have completely ossified, but for the one little channel that chance had kept open to her.

An elder sister having married unfortunately, and died of a broken heart, had left her only possession, a son, as a memento to her friends. So long as the grandparents had lived, the family had united in annihilating the amiabilities of the motherless David. He had been scolded and caressed alternately during the entire period of his childhood, while his little gastric tube had been converted into a miniature railway for the conveyance of little barley dogs and cats, which were incessantly availing themselves of that conveyance. Possibly, it was his greediness of appetite that gave to the boy's eyes that projecting, half-frightened appearance, which David wears to this day; at all events he is free to confess that the prominence of his ears is entirely artificial, having been cultivated by listening to his aunt's secrets, and standing at the doorways ears up.

As David's peculiar genius developed itself, he grew to be a perfect gad-fly upon his aunt's comfort; but loving him as she did, equally at least with her animal kingdom, and considering him as her own personal property, the son of her orphanage, she held him to her heart as unflinchingly as did the Spartan lad the animal that devoured him. As David advanced in years, he made himself serviceable upon the homestead, ruled his aunt with his whimsical good humor, relieved her of all superfluities in the form of sweetmeats, cordials, and spending money, turned her richest sentimentalities to ridicule, assisted her imagination by personating

ghosts and headless men, and finally exhausted his small literary acquirements in sending her amorous valentines and mysterious love-letters.

Of Miss Dickey's personal charms we are silent. Old Father Time, who is never satisfied toying with young cheeks and raven locks, always seems unmindful of maidens of uncertain age. It is astonishing how years come and go, and little children grow up, and old people totter into the grave, while these maiden ladies, like Joshua's sun, seem to stand still in the mid-heavens! never growing older, grayer, or stooping, but simply sallow and stiffer—not decaying with years, but literally embalmed by time!

Such was the powerful founder of the Carean African Friend's Society! who right valiantly did combat upon the side of her beloved pastor. She had compared Mr. Cary to all sorts of martyrs, and bustled about in his defence with a zeal that was particularly ungratifying to the minister's wife! Indeed, had Miss Dickey been a beast of burden, she could not have labored more assiduously—bearing ever to the good man's ears the low gossip of the neighborhood; she even wrote an elaborate defence of that gentleman's tactics, which covered twelve sheets of foolscap. We do not propose to give it.

The Carean African Friend's Society was organized, and Miss Dickey was of course honored with the presidency. The following is the speech delivered by her upon taking her seat:

"Ladies and—(ahem)—Ladies :

"Being called most unexpectedly to occupy this august chair, and preside over the deliberations of this intelligent society, I beg to be allowed to express my deep sense of my own unworthiness, and assure you that to the utmost of my feeble abilities I shall endeavor to discharge my arduous duties with faithfulness to myself and constituents ! "

"Be-au-tiful ! " whispered Mrs. Hobbs, nudging her neighbor, to which energetic admiration her friend responded by a wink of approval !

"It is well understood that the object of our society is to devise ways and means to alleviate the sufferings of our colored brethren ! The best method of procedure is now open for discussion, and we should be glad if you would all express your sentiments and opinions freely ! "

The silence was profound.

"Don't all speak to once," whispered Mrs. Hobbs. The friend raised the tips of her left hand fingers to her mouth to conceal a bashful giggle.

"Mrs. Baker, will you favor us with your views ? "

"I do not feel competent to advise," said Mrs. Baker, modestly ; "I am willing to unite heartily in any plan that can ameliorate the sufferings of black or white. I have no definite views in regard to the best method of alleviating the condition of slaves, unless we can give them their freedom and educate them like the whites."

"I should like to know who is going to educate them," asked Mrs. Smith; "the South won't do it, that is certain, and we at the North are overrun now with town paupers and foreigners! If any one wishes to adopt niggers and their progeny, I hope they will have the chance to do it, if that's all!"

"I did not say it was expedient or advisable," returned Mrs. Baker, pleasantly; "I said I did not know how we could benefit the slaves until they were educated."

"Now, ladies, I'll tell you what's what!" chimed in Mrs. Hobbs; "jest give 'em their liberty, and let 'em take care of theirselves! them's Mr. Hobbs' and my opinion!"

"But, my dear, they never have been taught to take care of themselves," urged Mrs. Baker; "it would be like casting children into the sea, and expecting them to swim without previous practice!"

"How ree-dic-u-lous!" sneered Mrs. Hobbs; "jest as if men and women who have worked all their lives for other folks with lickin', couldn't work for theirselves without lickin'! I say, give 'em liberty—liberty or nurthin'! what's the use of nurthin' at all, if you don't have liberty!"

"Well, how will you give them liberty?" asked Mrs. Smith.

"Buy 'em, if you can't get 'em any other way."

"But who will buy them? who can buy them?"

"Why, abolitioners, of course," shouted Mrs. Hobbs.

"My dear woman, all the abolitionists in Minden couldn't buy one black baby, and we are a fair sample, I suppose, of Northern abolitionists. We bear evil fruits enough, I allow, but the 'root of all evil' unfortunately doesn't flourish in our soil."

"Well, I'd buy 'em, any way," persisted Mrs. Hobbs.

"As Mrs. Baker says," said Mrs. Bryan, "I am willing to aid in every good work, but I must confess I do not see how we can permanently benefit the blacks unless we can educate them in some way; and as that would be the work of ages, I think I should prefer having them liberated as rapidly as circumstances will admit, and returned to Africa. If we put them back where nature placed them, we at least are not responsible for their future unhappiness."

"Perhaps not," suggested Mrs. Kimball, "but this generation were not born in Africa; it is no more their country than ours. I don't imagine I should like to be packed off to Africa by my friends."

Nannie laughed. "I did not think of that; I guess, after all, it would be as well to let them alone!"

"I say buy 'em," cried a voice. "Steal 'em," added a second; and forthwith a violent discussion sprang up, and a jargon of shrill voices rose one above the other, of which nothing was discernible but slave, sla—nig—nigger, nigger, nig—Cary, Africa, slave, nigger, nigger, nig! Africa—Cary—nig! The secretary held her pen in the

most stupid confusion, and "our own correspondent" retired with precipitancy. When they had fatigued themselves with clamor, and exhausted both their breath and their argument, it was discovered that the object of the society was more mystified than at the beginning, since they could not discover even their own motives or desires.

"For my part," said Mrs. Smith, "I do not see what we have accomplished by our afternoon's meeting."

"Why," laughed Nannie, "we have agitated the subject."

"And ourselves too," added Mrs. Kimball, dryly.

Mrs. Baker advised that a committee of three be appointed to draft resolutions, and decide upon some method of procedure. For one she was ready to assent to any thing.

After a good deal of wrangling and loud talking, Mrs. Cary, Miss Dickey, and Mrs. Baker were nominated, and the society adjourned.

The next meeting was held at Mr. Smith's, and after the proper preliminaries it was decided to accumulate funds by all available means, prepare articles for sale, and have a fair early in the autumn! This proposition was received with great unanimity, and our friends immediately bestirred themselves to gather up cloths and yarn, and were soon absorbed in linen, and needle-books, hosiery, and pin-cushions.

Sewing circles of all descriptions are subject to great reverses of favor. One would suppose that being fairly adrift upon their benevolent mission, our friends could have steered their small crafts free of quicksands! But a new difficulty presented itself; as some of the members were more bountifully possessed of this world's goods than others, and had indulged in a little harmless display upon the occasions of their tea drinkings; the humbler members were not willing to expose the condition of their larder and china closet by endorsing the refreshments that terminated the afternoon labors! "They would prefer to go home before tea!" Mrs. Johnson, who had a pretty plated tea-service, objected decidedly; for her part, she liked to get tea. Nannie, too, who doted upon setting a dainty table, protested it was the most unsocial proposition in the world; it was so pleasant chatting over teacups! Mrs. Baker, who more readily appreciated the motives for the suggestion, preferred to simplify the affair, arranging the table with the family china, and confining the edibles to plain bread and cake.

Mrs. Kimball said that, although she preferred a good tea, the nicer the better, still she was not difficult about her victuals; she could eat in any way, or any thing, or could go without—any way to keep peace.

Mrs. Smith laughingly suggested they should use rice and molasses, as an expression of sympathy for the slave!

Mrs. Hobbs objected to plain cake and bread ; she thought they ought to be allowed three sorts—for her part, she always wanted doughnuts !

The inestimable Mrs. Johnson looked her contempt, while Nannie and Mrs. Kimball exchanged culinary smiles.

Miss Dickey hoped the unimportant affair of eating would not occupy their attention for a moment. While Afric's sons were bleeding at every pore it ill-became them to " wrangle about the tea-table ;" and so the tea-drinking was referred to a " committee."

CHAPTER XI.

And when she ended,
There was a general cry of "Bravo! Splendid!"—THE SARGENT.

Now, as if Providence had smiled upon our philanthropists, and designed signally to reward their ardor, it was just at this time announced to Mr. Cary, by letter, that a fugitive slave, escaped from Alabama, would be forwarded directly to the protection of the Carean Friends Society. Expectation, not satisfied with the usual tip-toe, got upon stilts. The society was thrown into a humming, buzzing, fluttering condition by this bit of intelligence!

Mr. Cary was compelled to read the letter over and over again to little groups in the corners, each of which persisted in misconstruing some passage, and reading the letter for themselves. The letter was lionized. Mr. Cary was asked all manner of questions, and urged to adopt as many ridiculous stratagems to secure the negro in safety. They would "barrel him up, and roll him in like a barrel of cider!" "They would dress him in female garments!" "They would paint him white!" "They would box him up like Smyrna

figs!" Indeed, the dear creatures exhausted their own philanthropy, and poor Mr. Cary's patience, and went home supremely blest!

But the necessity of having some sensible person to act as the agent on the U. R. R., and receive the Ebony treasure at the station was soon seen, and this brings us to a point, where we must introduce to you Frank Stanton, Esq., better known in the neighborhood as Squire Bryan's Adonis!

Mr. Stanton was a fun-loving, but otherwise fastidious young gentleman of family and pretensions, a relative of Squire Bryan, with whom he had now been residing some time in elegant leisure under the pretence of "reading law" with the Squire. Of his father and family, nothing was particularly known in Minden, but he was indefinitely understood to be a Southerner.

At all reasonable hours, our Adonis might be seen at the office window, his handsome head reposing upon the back of his study chair, his slippered feet resting upon the green baize of the office table, and his graceful negligé revealing the daintiest of waistcoats and the most immaculate of linen!

Dog-eared Blackstone was forgotten upon the floor, and Story, face downward, reposed upon the window sill, over which the fragrant smoke from the meerscham ("colored") curled gently up into the outer air. In the smile of our Adonis there was magic and contagion in his clear, ringing laugh! Rich or poor, young or old, were

all alike to him. His smile, his purse, his cap, and his arm, were equally at their service. He was the very best example ever met with of a really "first-rate fellow."

The homely, honest phase of Minden life, was novel and charming to him. He listened good-naturedly to the garrulity of age, gave a helping hand cheerfully to the over-burdened farmer, praised the home-brewed beers of the matrons, and accepted their little impromptu lunches with the grace of a Pelham. In fine he was the idol of ma'mas, and the adoration of every young lady throughout the township!

Especially was he the pet and protégé of our heroine, Miss Dickey. If he enjoyed and sometimes encouraged her absurdities, it was rather from intense mirthfulness, than a desire to render her ridiculous in the eyes of others. His versatile and pliable talents made him the safety valve of emergencies, and it was therefore to him that she resorted on the present occasion, for upon her as presiding officer of the Society devolved the responsibility of the fugitive's safe conduct, and he was her friend. His being himself from the very den of all iniquity, a slave State, did not seem to her as dust in the balance, and, as she had anticipated, he consented to act. This was not all, but we will let the lady speak for herself.

"You see, Mr. Stanton," she said, "we are all so absorbed in our dear brother, who is fleeing to us for succor and safety! We, that is, the Society, wish to open our arms (figuratively, of course), and clasp him

to our bosoms! Wishing, as we do, to embody our principles of freedom and equality, so that all the world will understand the position we take, we have thought it would be advisable to take some decisive measures upon this occasion, and we thought, as we were passing, we would step in and consult you."

Frank bowed with his hand upon his heart.

"We thought," continued Miss Dickey, "we would get up some slight demonstration, but as we are not familiar with such things, we shall have to rely upon your kindness in assisting us to arrange it."

"Am I to understand, that you wish to get up this demonstration, as you call it, for the express purpose of receiving this negro?" asked Stanton, a little doubtfully.

"Exactly, that is it, we wish to receive our forlorn brother!"

Never did merriment peal out in richer laughter, than broke from the lips of our Adonis, as he fell back convulsively upon the lounge; "I beg your pardon," he cried between his explosions, "a thousand, thousand pardons," and the young man wiped his eyes and swept back the hair from his flushed face, only to renew his cachinnations. "My dear Miss Dickey," he cried at last, when he was enabled to control himself, "the thing is most preposterous! for heaven's sake, do not encourage the Society to add this capstone to their 'monymment' for their enemies to laugh at!"

Miss Dickey's plumes were ruffled. "You are

very severe," she said, "Mr. Stanton, but where is the absurdity of demonstrating our gratification over a rescued brother? It is customary to 'receive' white gentlemen when they have returned from expeditions in which nothing was accomplished by them particularly praiseworthy! I do not suppose receptions are designed to indicate the importance of the individual received, but rather the state of feeling existing among those to whom he is returned; and in this aspect I shall receive him!"

"Ha! it is your proposition, then?" and Frank cast a sidelong, roguish glance at his visitor.

"Of course, it is," she said with great dignity, and a flush of indignation.

"Ah, excuse me, Miss Dickey; that is quite a different view of the case! We excuse in individuals, what would be folly in the masses, and who but knows that what your fair hands find to do, you do with your might! I place myself at your disposal—I will aid, abet, and defend you to the last drop of my blood!" and Frank threw himself into an attitude of such chivalric devotion, that Miss Dickey involuntarily pronounced him "charming."

"But seriously," she asked "where is the impropriety of this reception?"

Now our Adonis understood his antagonist too well, not to know that he might as well attempt to annihilate the rocks of Gibraltar with a tack hammer, as convince

any lady, and this lady in particular, that she was in an error, so he most graciously succumbed! "There was no impropriety."

Miss Dickey was enraptured. Pic-nics, and Will-o'-the-Wisp rambles were her especial favorites. To tug little willow baskets full of bread and butter, up steep, rocky hills, to sit down with a red face, tangled hair, and rent dress upon a little mound, especially devoted to ants' nests, to quaff lukewarm lemonade or brook water from a single tin cup, was the enigmatical charade, for what Miss Dickey called "Delight."

Miss Dickey, therefore, would have a pic-nic. Mr. Cary should open the solemn exercises by prayer, after which should follow singing by the choir, and a poetical address of her own composition, delivered by herself, after which our Adonis should present the Received to be crowned with a wreath of white and black roses, to intimate the good time coming, and the future amalgamation of the races! To all of which Frank Stanton should be obliging enough to respond, in case the Received was too much affected to reply!

Frank listened with extreme gravity. "My dearest Miss Dickey, nothing can surpass the artistic elegance of your arrangement. Two objections occur to me, shall I offend by suggesting them?"

"Oh no."

"Being myself a Southerner, I am acquainted with one fact of which you may not be aware; that is, mos-

quitoes, and black-flies, and all kinds of woodland insects are as fond of black blood, as a number one abolitionist! If you should take that fellow into pine woods, they would scent him a mile off, and every identical mosquito and venomous insect would rush to the scene of action, and get up a reception among themselves, a thousand times more affecting than yours. Now, my dear madam, imagine that poor fellow being compelled to listen to poetry under such delicate circumstances even from such lips as yours! To use your own language, 'he would bleed at every pore!'"

Miss Dickey glanced suspiciously at Frank's immovable countenance.

"Secondly, it is very difficult for ladies to speak in the open air, so as to be audible to the crowd. For this reason, I would suggest, that the reception take place at Glynn's hotel, where the ceremony could be enacted upon the piazza, and the audience would have the advantage of standing below you. Beside, we could have supper, and toasts, a good social time, and a hop in the evening." Miss Dickey, who had fancied herself arrayed as a sylvan nymph, hovering above the enraptured black-knight, dazzling his eyes with her beauty, as she encircled his brow with roses and his heart with love, could not resign her pretty imaginings, without some pangs of regret. Yet her poetical address could not be perilled, and she accepted Mr. Stanton's amendment.

Every thing was arranged entirely to Miss Dickey's satisfaction. Stanton having solemnly pledged himself to keep the fugitive in the background until the auspicious moment arrived for presentation, Miss Dickey departed, and immediately bestirred herself to engage the people to cooperate in her benevolent enterprise.

As might be expected, landlord Glynn was zealous for the reception. He avowed himself ready to cater for black and white, to spare no "pains or expense," to entertain man and beast, and to extend invitations abroad by every facility in his power.

Mr. Cary was too sensible to tolerate such an absurdity. He reasoned and refused; and it was only when he found the reception persisted in, that he gave his unwilling consent to unite with them.

Squire Bryan considered it "rich." Mr. Smith rubbed his hands with great glee, and shouted, "Give me niggers, or give me death!" Colonel Johnson and his "inestimable lady" consented to be present, because the reception was such an "uncommon occasion," while Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs bustled about, entering into the business minutiae with great gravity and zeal.

Upon the day when the Society met to complete its arrangements, Miss Dickey might be seen with her little cork-screw curls all atremble, fluttering from one member to another, like an autumnal butterfly among frost-bitten astors.

CHAPTER XII.

———This is he
Who bath upon him still that natural stamp.—TITUS ADRONICUS.

Now after Miss Dickey's departure, Mr. Frank Stanton ventured to indulge in some reflections upon "dirty work," the result of which was that Mr. Frank Stanton had a private interview with Mr. Hobbs, during which a bank note changed hands, and Mr. Hobbs pledged himself, his word, and his honor, with Mrs. Hobbs' entire approval, to bring up the Ebony treasure, into the goodly land of Minden, and Frank Stanton returned, at his ease, to rejoice over the transfer of his laurels, and make merry with his wise mentor!

Late in the afternoon, as Mr. Hobbs was perfecting his arrangements for an early start in the morning, he found himself tête-à-tête with Squire Bryan.

"How is it, friend Hobbs," asked the latter, mischievously, "that you have been enticed into this expedition? Have you taken into consideration the dangers you may encounter?"

"Dangers!" echoed Hobbs, "can't a man travel

fifty miles over good New England roads, about his own business, without getting his life insured?"

"But suppose this negro is pursued by his master, backed up by constables with bowie knives and revolvers, and a troop of blood-hounds," asked the Squire with a shrug, "and you answerable to the law, for aiding in the abduction of a slave! eh?"

The scales fell from the eyes of our Philanthropist.

"Is that why Stanton wants me to go instead of himself?" asked Hobbs suspiciously.

"Possibly!"

Hobbs was silent and thoughtful.

"Let me bid you farewell," said the Squire, extending his hand with a face expressive of the most dolorous commiseration. "If," he added, "evil should befall you, you may rely upon my remembrance of your widow!"

During that tedious night, as Hobbs lay upon his bed, reflecting upon his perilous journey, he tossed, and tumbled, and lashed his imagination with all sorts of indefinite dangers. What flocks of phantom sheep he drove over imaginary stone walls! With what weariness of spirit he counted through hundreds and thousands and millions and billions! How frantically he rolled his eyes from right to left and left to right!

Occasionally he dozed, wakefully, and groaned aloud as he saw in the cold moonlight the bleached skeletons of runaway slaves, gnashing their teeth at him

in ghastly despair; or, pursued by panting bloodhounds, he struggled to fly, only to fall at their very feet, and be scorched by their hot breath. Finally his eyes closed, and, from pure exhaustion, our friend slept—aye, and dreamed! The way was long and dark, and full of obstacles, the slave was beside him, not man, or ghost, but a being so awfully mysterious, that his very blood curdled, as they drove on in the dead silence! Ha! the negro springs upon him—grasps him! throttles him! Mercy! mercy!

“Now, yeou Hobbs! what on arth are you a shakin me, after that are fashion, for?” shrieked his amiable spouse. “Do get out!”

Mr. Hobbs returned to his tumblings and tossings, and, now more anxious to flee sleep than to woo it, resigned himself to await the dawn.

What ages are concentrated in one wakeful hour! What trifles loom up, bearing down upon us with the blackest of piratical flags, refusing all compromise with conscience, and stifling the very atmosphere with horrible phantasies! A hundred times had Hobbs arranged his last will and testament! a hundred times did his disconsolate widow, trailing in black bombazine glide around his unsodden grave! Like imperial Charles he even rehearsed, in imagination, his own burial, and chanted the bass to his own requiem!

Faintly the gray dawn peeped in at the unshaded window, but so coyly she seemed to glide away again

as the good man rubbed his sunken eyes and gazed at her with his wan, wistful face. Gradually she grew confident, and smiled so cheerfully upon the homely furniture and uncarpeted floor, that the nervous victim half smiled at his own apprehension! How impatiently he listened to the heavy breathing of his sleeping partner, who, heartless sinner, snoozed away, utterly indifferent to their approaching separations! Mrs. Hobbs, all unconscious of the mental solicitude of her dearly beloved, slept on with that depth and abandon, so natural to pure animal health, her unadorned night cap forming a most unpoetical setting to the round, florid, and altogether ugly face, that pointed its pug nose to the ceiling, and blew its own trumpet in a manner perfectly astounding to even Hobbs. Mr. Hobbs listened to this tuneful nightingale, with great conjugal forbearance, until an unusually prolonged and sonorous inspiration aroused even the sleeper herself.

"Hobbs," she muttered indistinctly through her dry throat, "how you do snore!"

"Snore!" cried the accused, with a nervous violence, only justifiable by his nightmares! "I'll tell you what it is, Miss Hobbs, you have kept me awake all night! 'Tis a shocking bad habit of yours, and if I had know'd you snored, I never would have married you!"

"Married me, indeed!" retorted the lady, her eyes flying wide open with a snap, not unlike the capsule of the garden balsam when too rudely pressed! "Didn't

I marry you to save your life, because you said you'd drink bed-bug pison if I didn't? It's no wonder that I snore, a poor woman, that's seen the trouble I have, since I was married!"

Hobbs, who had his own reasons for smoking the pipe of peace, conceded the point, and proceeded, like a dutiful husband to consult her in regard to the perils that surrounded him. He repeated the ominous words of Squire Bryan, and suggested his own doubts in regard to his personal safety. Finally he repeated his ominous dream, and intimated his determination to send for Squire Bryan and make his will!

"Make a fiddle-stick!" cried Mrs. Hobbs; who, whatever her deficiencies might be, was not wanting in courage. "If I couldn't hoe my own row with one nigger, I'd have pluck enough to die game!"

Mr. Hobbs, who was expecting some pretty little outburst of connubial affection to follow this affecting allusion to his death, was not a little irritated at this unreasonable resignation.

"Miss Hobbs," he said solemnly, and with nasal accent, "you'll see the time when you'll think of this 'ere!"

Mrs. Hobbs snorted out her contempt.

"You jest hand me over that ten dollar bill that Stanton gave you, and I'll bring the nigger, in less than no time, so you can save your bacon!"

This proposal was very fair, there was no denying

that! and although the husband was not a little surprised at the coolness of the proposition, still "his bacon" was not a consideration to be overlooked by himself, whatever might be the estimation in which it was held by his better half! Beside, the ten spot would remain "in the family" if "the worst" should befall her, and, he remembered with pleasure that however efficacious "bed-bug poison" had been deemed to assuage the grief of unrequited love while single, it had never been recommended as an antidote for a widower's grief!

"My dear," he said, "you are a woman of remarkable courage! I always knew that!"

"And you are a man of remarkable little, and I allers knew that!" blurted out the woman, who could never bear to be "my dear'd."

Hobbs winced.

"I was going this morning," he said hesitatingly, "you couldn't—"

"Yes, I could!" cried Mrs. Hobbs, "but you jest mind this, I shan't stir one peg, till that bill is mine."

"Half," suggested Hobbs.

"No you don't!" cried the wife, "I can't expose my life you know, for five dollars! The whole or none, so there's the end on't!"

Mr. Hobbs sighed. Money was sweet, but life was sweeter; the world was full of embryo Mrs. Hobbs, and crape bands were cheap. Mr. Hobbs drew his coat

slowly to the bedside, extracted the bill from a soiled leather wallet, and passed it reluctantly to his wife.

“Snooky!” ejaculated Mrs. Hobbs, as the money touched her palm. “It’s a bargain!” and in just sixty minutes, Mrs. Hobbs was seated in the centre of the yellow farm waggon, a rein in each hand, a whip and basket of lunch by her side, and a bag of oats in the rear. The horse, the waggon, and the notable dame simultaneously turned their backs upon Minden, and Mr. Hobbs was left a widower in perspective.

As Mrs. Hobbs rolled over the road, vigorously plying the horsewhip, and by sundry jerkings of the reins and chirrupings, intimating her impatience of delay, it is not to be inferred that she lavished sentiment upon the natural beauties of the scenery. The rumbling vehicle glided by charming rivulets, gurgling and singing between banks verdant with rich mosses and tangled vines, while all down among moss-covered rocks, tufts of blue and white violets modestly concealed their beauty beneath their shields of green. The rich, carmine, cardinal flower, rose imperious from the rank ferns, and clusters of wild blue lupine, and nodding honeysuckles vainly filled the air with uncoveted perfume. The plaintive flute bird, whistled its dreamy notes in the solitary forests of dark pine, and the bob-o’-link, and golden robins, the wild canary, and the blue jay darted around her, their brilliant plumage flashing in the golden sunshine, until even the

jaded horse bent his ears to listen, and looked wistfully up, into the deep shaded hill-sides.

But Mrs. Hobbs, alone, earnest for the accomplishment of her individual mission, chirruped, and jerked, and plashed, unmindful of the scorching sun, beguiling her moments of repose by humming snatches of old love songs and murderous legends, or giving her unmusical voice free execution in this her favorite ballad.

“Down Fly Market lived a maid,
Making sassage was her trade!
’Twas there I saw that cruel she,
A making sassengers for he.”
Tu-ral-u-ral-u-ral-addy!
Tural ural la!

As noon approached, our independent traveller seeking a shady nook where water and grass invited repose, released the horse from the waggon, and leaving the animal to crop the green herbage, seated herself by the running water, uncovered her basket of cold viands, and with great gravity proceeded to dine. The repast completed, Mrs. Hobbs shook the crumbs from her dress, twisted some green leaves into an emerald goblet, and drank, without mentioning it, to her own success. Then leading her brute companion to the water, and patting his neck to signify their mutual satisfaction, she slipped the thills into the harness, and resumed her journey.

Arriving the day following at the place designated by Mr. Cary, Mrs. Hobbs, for the first time in her life,

had the pleasure of beholding a negro face to face. She looked at him much as a child would examine an elephant, or any other wild animal, but the investigation was evidently less satisfactory, and when the waggon was ready for her to return, it was with a slight tone of disgust that she ordered him to "get in." The man sprang nimbly in behind.

"What on arth are you in there for?" she asked curtly, as she looked for his whereabouts. "Get out."

She was obeyed.

"There," said the woman, planting herself firmly upon the left side of the waggon, "set down there, and drive."

"Beg pardon, missus, dis nigger can't drike."

"Can't drive," cried the dame, opening her round eyes in astonishment, "what on arth is the reason you can't drive?"

"Beg pardon, missus, dis nigger nebber learned how!"

To Mrs. Hobbs, the very idea of being learn'd to drive, was intensely absurd; she had always known how.

"Never learned how to drive," she repeated slowly. "Did I ever? Well, if that don't beat all natur!" and she regarded him as if he had been a mermaid, or woolly horse. "Well then," she said with some contempt, "you jest set over there," and pushing by him,

she took the reins, and the party were homeward bound.

"What's your name?" she asked after a short silence.

"Cæsar, missus."

"Cæsar what?"

"Cæsar, missus," he repeated with a grin.

"Well, what's your other name?"

"Beg pardon, missus, dis nigger han't got no tudder name."

"Hain't got no other name, why, who in the world was your father?"

"Beg pardon, missus, dis nigger nebber had no fadder."

"Snooky!" and Mrs. Hobbs was speechless from sheer wonder!

Gradually Mrs. Hobbs became familiar with the dark complexion and national lineaments of her companion, and exercised her curiosity and loquaciousness upon her new acquaintance without stint or measure. Cæsar, who was not slow in perceiving her readiness to give full credence to his most absurd relations, and was not reluctant to have himself considered a hero, poured into her willing ear a most lavish account of his sufferings. His deprivations and personal corpulency might have seemed incongruous to a physiological listener, but Mrs. Hobbs was no skeptic, and was prepared to believe in any evil that traced its origin to slavery!

The nine o'clock bell was pealing out its warning for all dames to put their houses in order for the night, and for peace-loving citizens to seek their own homes, when our weary travellers rolled up to the side door of Mr. Hobbs' farm house, and were greeted with great cordiality by little Mary, upon whom the housekeeping duties had devolved during the absence of her foster-mother.

She had been "so anxious," she said, in the most musical of voices, and her silvery laugh rippled out upon the quiet night air, as she ran to notify her father of the arrival. He, good man, was smoking his clay pipe in the sitting-room window, with his heavy boots upon the window sill, utterly oblivious to all terrestrial objects!

With great composure, and evidently with some reluctance, he knocked the ashes from his short-stemmed pipe, and proceeded to welcome his wife with bluff good nature, and off-hand raillery.

Mrs. Hobbs was invulnerable, and as she came to the ground, ordered her liege lord to "drive that fellow straight to the young Squire's office."

Our Adonis was enjoying the evening by the open window, his handsome head reposing upon his clasped hands, nursing his feeble ambition by the rays of the bloody Mars, or seeking inspiration from the imperious Venus.

As Frank gazed in silent rapture, Byron's beautiful

Invocation to Night rose to his lips, and he was repeating slowly and half dreamingly—

“Ye stars, which are the poetry of heaven!
If in our aspirations to be great
We do o'erleap our mortal state,
And claim communion with you, 'tis to be forgiven.”

* * * * * * *

“Squire,” cried a voice at the door, “I’ve brought you that ’ere nigger!”

“Nigger be damned!” cried Frank, testily, falling aplomb from his celestial explorations. “Hobbs, take the fellow over to Glynn’s, and tell him to give him supper, bed, and breakfast, at my expense, and keep him under lock and key until I see him!”

“All right,” cried Hobbs, retreating.

“Confound the nigger,” cried Stanton, springing up, and dashing down the window angrily, he turned the key in the office-door, and strode nervously out into the dewy night air.

CHAPTER XIII.

The wealthy curled darlings of our nation.—OTHELLO.

THE day destined to be known in the annals of Minden as the day of “the reception,” came in pleasantly. The sun laughed and danced, and quivered with delight, as it peeped over the green hill-tops. The birds, true to their early mass, poured forth such rich gushes of melody, that little Mary, who was already astir, thought they must know that another spirit had become free like their own. The air was moist and balmy, and all day long the soft breezes swept over the village green, and nature seemed vying with man to welcome a soul to freedom.

Young Stanton, having completed his very perfect toilet, wended his way to the hotel to enact his own part in the day’s drama. As he entered the room in which Cæsar had been deposited to await his arrival, the two confronted each other with countenances which, however differently they might express astonishment,

were equally suggestive of a most unexpected recognition!

"What brought you here, sir?" asked Stanton, sternly, as the truth dawned upon him, and he beheld before him a negro from his own father's plantation.

"Lor' Gor 'Mighty!" cried Cæsar, throwing himself upon his knees before Stanton; "who'd ebber a thought of findin' Mass' Frank, way up here 'mong dese-'ere mountings? Don't tink, for one blessed minit, dat dis nigger go for run away from he blessed massa! I'se jes' on a visit, fur sartin, and nebber should thought comin' on visit, neider, if it had'nt bin fur dem cussed abolitioners! Hope to drop down dead dis blessed minit if dat aint jes' de whole truf!"

"Hold your tongue, sir, and get up!" Frank threw himself into a chair in great perplexity. "Fine doings, this," he muttered, "conniving at the escape of father's negro, and exhibiting him before all Minden as a specimen of abused humanity! You always were a rascal, Cæsar, and you always will be. Much good may you do the good Samaritans that have seduced you!"

"Dat's jes' de blessed truf, Massa Frank, and no mistakin' dat 'ar! Nebber was sich rascäl as dis 'ere chile was from his berry fus' bref! So I say to my 'sef, Cæsar, what for you stay on my 'spectable massa's plantation, and keep kickin' up debbil ob a muss, an' keepin' civil niggers in a 'roar! an' so, Massa Frank,

dis nigger jes' took an' visit he frens in de norf! An' dat is de whole truf—hope to drop down dead dis blessed minit, if I does'n speak de truf, like a colored pussun of veracity!" And here Cæsar grinned out his own admiration of his ingenious defence!

Frank, whose brow had gathered blackness as Cæsar proceeded, sprang to his feet, and with a tone of decision, said,

"Cæsar, there is but one course to be pursued in this silly affair; you must return directly to my father. If you go quietly, so much the better; my own private opinion is, that your loss is his gain; but I have my duty to perform as his son, and you have yours as a servant. You must go back!"

"Oh, Lor' Gor 'Mighty," cried Cæsar, throwing himself in a supplicating attitude at Frank's feet, "have massy—have massy! I'se a poor black debbil, and I'se no cons'quence to Mass' Stanton, no how! I'se nothin' but a cuss to all de niggers, and I nebber see any 'tickler need of dis chile bein' made, enny way; but seein' I is made (and sartin dis chile nebber gin his consent, if he had been asked 'fore he was made), why can't he be free chile, Massa Frank? free for his 'sef?"

"Why, Cæsar, what makes you wish to be free?"

The uncultivated black placed his hand upon his heart, and said with quivering face,

"Someting here, Massa Frank. 'Tis great 'ting to be free!"

Frank sprang to his feet and paced the floor with a quick, nervous tread. "Yes—it was a great thing to be free; and the revolutionary blood tingled through Stanton's veins!

"Cæsar," he asked, confronting the poor fellow with emotion, answer me truly, "was it simply this longing to be free that induced you to leave my father?"

"I hope to drop down dead dis blessed minit, if dat is'n jes' de whole truf," said Cæsar, solemnly.

"Then God forbid that my hand should blast the sweet promise of that heaven-implanted instinct!" cried Stanton.

A painful silence ensued. Frank slowly pacing the room, endeavoring to reconcile his duty with his personal desires; Cæsar, still kneeling, gazed after him with mingled stupor and despair. His fate was trembling upon his young master's lips!

"To whom have you revealed your master's name?" asked Stanton.

"Hope to drop down dead dis blessed minit if dis chile 'vealed his massa's name to ary livin' pussun whatsomever!"

"Has no one ever asked you to whom you belonged?"

"Don't tink dere hab, Massa Frank."

"Take time to reflect, and answer me positively."

Cæsar scratched his woolly pate thoughtfully.

"Dis chile knows for sartin," said Cæsar, slowly;

"he nebber 'vealed his 'sef, or his blessed massa's sef, to ary livin' pussun!"

Stanton regarded him a moment with a searching glance, which seeming satisfactory, and said,

"Very well, Cæsar; now listen to me, and let me tell you exactly what freedom will be to you. Do not think, because you have been so warmly welcomed by your Northern friends, that you will not need to labor. It is true, you will be a free man, and eat free bread, but let me tell you even Yankee bread has to be paid for. There is hardly one man in a hundred of all these who have encouraged your desertion of my father, who would put his hand into his pocket and give you a dollar, if it was to save you from the gutter! While the excitement continues, they will take you to their homes for a few days, and then cast you adrift, to sink or swim. You will find few of your own color with whom to associate, and you will be shunned by the Northerners, to whom your color and habits are not familiar. If you wish to find friends, they can only be secured by honesty and industry, for you will find the North have even a stronger affection for money than negroes! I tell you the truth; now give me your final decision—will you return or remain?"

Cæsar was suspicious and sullen.

"Perhaps it is natural you should distrust me," Frank said, perceiving his hesitation; "the truth is not always agreeable, but it is always safe; I have no wish

or motive in deceiving you! Will you return or be free?"

A sudden gleam broke over the sable face!

"Free, Marse Frank." And as if there was magic in the little monosyllable, he murmured over and over again, "free—free."

"Free, then, let it be," exclaimed Stanton, with decision; "but mark me, it is only upon this one condition, you shall never confess or betray to living man that you have ever known me or my father. If by any accident you should do so, I shall at once inform my father where you may be found."

Cæsar could not but be conscious of the magnanimity of his young master's decision. He dropped upon his knees, and with genuine tears and rude pathos poured forth in broken eloquence the gratitude of his heart.

"Now tears are like the rain, which soothes the thunder;
They keep the heart from splitting quite asunder!"

and Cæsar having relieved the pressure of gratitude to the heart, by this flow of emotion, wiped his swarthy face upon his coat sleeve, and grew radiant with complacency.

"And now, Cæsar, when this exhibition is over, remember this—you are never to accost me, or look at me, or notice me any more than you would an entire stranger; if you do it will lead to your de-

tection. If you get into trouble, do not seek me, and if you break your promises to me, remember—" and Frank twirled his cane significantly. "Remain here until you are sent for;" and Stanton, turning the key upon the illustrious guest, left Cæsar to his own reflection, and more especially to his own admiration.

No sooner were Frank's retreating footsteps heard upon the stairs, than Cæsar, with a slight toss of his ambrosial curls, proceeded to take a long and most gratifying survey of himself in a little mahogany-framed looking-glass that adorned his prison walls. He was, of course, "got up" for the occasion, and no peacock was ever vainer of his bright-eyed plumage, or strutted with half the vanity with which Cæsar now spread himself, as advancing, retreating, and revolving before the mirror, he regarded his apparel and grinned his delight. Directly he commenced a kind of pantomime with his own reflection; first he adopted the airs of the fop, and substituting the glass stopple of the cologne stand for an eye-glass, he ogled his blacker half with a persistency that would have cast many a shameless white "swell" into the shade.

He next assumed the character of the man of the world, and with great suavity shook hands with himself, offered himself a chair, seated himself, extended to himself the civility of the snuff-box, and flourished his white cambric with evident admiration of his own elegance.

From the gentleman he glided into the lover ; with his hand upon his heart, poor Cæsar sighed and wheezed like a dying porpoise ! The flames of Cupid seemed about to envelop his oleaginous person ; he pressed his yellow kids to his thick lips, and languished until he seemed in actual danger of consuming from spontaneous combustion.

Below stairs, meanwhile, mine host of the inn, flushed with importance, is bustling about from room to room, giving his orders with the shrill tone and nervous haste of one unaccustomed to great occasions. With every fresh arrival the hostler is sure to be missing, and has to be hunted up by the excited landlord, who invariably finds him with both hands plunged in his breeches pockets, and his jockey cap poised upon one ear, peering at the preparations through the open door.

The gentleman at the "bar" was really the only man of steady habits. In the good old times of yore, liquors were conspicuously displayed above the bar ; but even in Minden, decanters had lost their respectability, and were arranged for evasion. Still the bartender is in great demand upon show-days, and pours his "cooling drinks" with the air of a man who appreciates his own importance !

Without, the old, worn, half-painted hotel was doing its very best to look young and cheerful ; evergreens were flaunting and trailing from pillar and post, gaudy

bouquets arranged in all kinds of old china, and dilapidated pitchers coquettishly displayed their beauties from the open windows ; and little flags, with blackened stripes and stars, streamed out from every available corner. But the portico was the gayest of all, and was written all over with Miss Dickey's initials ! In the centre was erected a small rustic throne, over-arched with branches of oak and white pines, interspersed with wreaths and bouquets, and appropriate mottoes. Wood cuts of slaves writhing beneath the lash, or suing for mercy, were suspended in conspicuous places, and nothing was omitted which could give expression or piquancy to the occasion.

The people stood around and below, gazing, criticizing, and prophesying, as the crowd are wont to do, while beneath the pretty shade trees of the village green, the horses of economical visitors gnawed the juicy bark from their unprotected stems, or leisurely browsed the rich herbage at their feet.

As the hour of ceremony approaches, the crowd grows more dense, and Yankee speculations are opened in horse sheds, with jack-knives and silver watches ; molasses candy, pop corn and lozenges circulate, and snap crackers are beginning to be heard at a distance. Little boys forming all sorts of processions, paraded up and down the street, singing negro melodies, and shouting forth defiant and abusive phrases, indicative of each other's party ; one particularly was the observed of all

observers, and we are sorry to say was planned and carried into execution by no other than Miss Dickey's graceless nephew himself! Every juvenile desperado in Minden was pressed into service; with blackened faces they trudged through the streets, bearing a banner with the rebellious motto, "Niggers is riz!"

CHAPTER XIV.

"Consider their case in the light it deserves,
And pity the state of their stomachs and nerves."

AN EPISTLE FROM BATH.

HOWEVER dreary the word "last" may seem when coupled with a dollar, a friend, or a life, it is a very agreeable monosyllable when it attaches itself to the hour of expectation. "One o'clock at last," cried the weary and heated expectants; and a slight bustle upon the balcony was the precursor to the swaying of the crowd below. Short and small people elongated themselves by standing upon tiptoe, and stretching their necks to almost fabulous extensions. Tall and bulky individuals, who could have seen from any position, elbowed their way to the most desirable locations, where with their hats under their arms they enlarged their general outlines, greatly to the annoyance of the shorts, who kept up a series of dodgings for bird's-eye views.

Small children were knocked over, and stepped upon like so many puppies, and in imitation of that quadruped gave audible intimation of their resentment, while

mammas muttered out their indignation, without regard to musical cadence. Finally, Mr. Cary, the Receiving Committee, and Miss Dickey passed the open door, and took their positions upon the decorated piazza. A few leading members of the choir next appeared, whom the chorister arranged with the viol here, and the bass there; and the stout, florid girl, with two spit curls upon each temple, was placed side by side with Mary Hobbs.

And so the actors arrange, and are arranged, and when precision is gratified, Mr. Cary, with uplifted hands, says solemnly, "Let us invoke the blessing of God," and being a sincere hearted man, striving to do his duty as he sees it, pours forth an eloquent and earnest supplication that slavery may cease from off the face of the earth.

The singing of the "African's Lament," those old, familiar words, the reading of which has made many an embryo abolitionist, was next in order. Despite the low thunder of the bass and the squealing of the abominable fiddle, or the loud, strong notes of the maid with the spit curls, a gushing, warbling, bird-like music steals above, beneath, and around, the universal harshness, which we at once identify as the notes of the fairy with the golden hair, little Mary Hobbs.

When the music ceased, the people were quiet and decorous; but no sooner did Cæsar appear upon the platform, with glossy face and magnificent attire, than the crowd swayed again. Not one in twenty of that

assembly had ever before beheld a negro, and all expected to behold in him an outcast of the forlornest aspect, bearing every mark of cruelty and servility. Imagine then the disappointment, and our faithfulness as a chronicler of human nature compels us to add, the chagrin and regret of the beholders, to see not an object of pity and tears, but a stalwart, portly, gross African, with the smoothest and blackest of skins, clothed in blue broadcloth with gilt buttons, a buff vest, snowy linen with ruffles, and gloves the most spotless of Alexander's best—an outfit mischievously furnished, as the reader will remember, by Mr. Frank Stanton. The very air grew heavy with his perfumeries, and if any thing could have surpsaied the folly of his exterior, it most assuredly was found in the overwhelming importance of his swagger, and the truly negro, but utterly indescribable "fine frenzy" with which he rolled his eyes over the spectators, and looked his consciousness of being "a distinguished individual." For a moment the silence was intense, and at that fatal instant, some youngster of the impish party, regardless of confessions and free seats at second tables, shouted at the top of his lungs, "Oh, I'm the best looking nigger in the county—Oh!" and the final "oh" was caught up and bandied about by the outsiders with such wonderful inflections and elongations, that the crowd began slightly to hiss, then to clap, to laugh and hurra, until the hubbub was complete!

"Does your mother know you're out?" cried a voice from the crowd! "Go it, slippers," cried another, who had a glimpse of the white hosiery! "What's the price of cologne?" yells a third! "Any more ruffles where them come from?" asks a fourth! "Don't soil your gloves, dear," and then prolonged cheers. Now Cæsar had been instructed by Stanton to bow very low when the clapping was coupled with his name, and in his excitement, not comprehending the confusion, he faced about, and with his gloved hand upon his buff waistcoat, bowed so exceedingly low, that some one moving behind him came in contact with his person, and had well-nigh precipitated him into the upturned faces of his admirers!

Here Mr. Cary rose, and intimating by a wave of his hand his wish to be heard, entreated them to be silent, as a personal favor to himself. Order and quiet restored, the ceremonies were concluded entirely to the satisfaction of all interested parties. The gaunt figure of Miss Dickey within the rural arch looked exceedingly comfortless in her dress of white book muslin, than which nothing could be stiffer, unless indeed it was surpassed by the little corkscrew curls, that maiden ladies for some unaccountable reason insist upon wearing, "in such a winterish way."

The address, which we forbear giving for reasons of our own not related to its excellence, was in Miss Dickey's "own peculiar and beautiful style."

The reply was in Frank Stanton's best manner. To this day we have never been able to decide in our own minds whether it was the consciousness of the presence of sweet little Mary, or the rays that shot from the laughing eyes of Squire Bryan, that so electrified and inspired him !

The crowning of Cæsar's brow with the typical wreath of black and white roses, was received with immense applause ; and when Cæsar acknowledged this attention by the presentation of an immense bouquet, and a salute of her fair hand, more cordial than graceful, the village rung with acclamations !

But dinner was waiting in the dining hall, and the porcine suckling, who had laid down his life for Cæsar, was reposing upon " all fours " in the centre of the table, awaiting an attack, with the stoicism that only roasted pork can assume.

At either extremity of the table were placed the very familiar plaster-of-Paris images, known as the " Kneeling Samuel," which our original typifier, Miss Dickey, had painted black for the occasion ; the one bearing as a placard the Macedonian cry, " Come over and help us ! " the other, the memorable war-cry of Patrick Henry, " Give me liberty, or give me death ! "

Little wreaths of white and black roses were thrown around their necks, to intimate the good time coming, while bouquets, vines, parsleys and mints, and dishes

garnished with hard-boiled eggs and sliced lemons gave a holiday appearance to the repast, which, blending with the savory odors of roast meats and plum-puddings, must have produced a very agreeable sensation among such of the party as were interested in tickets at fifty cents each!

Of all earthly blessings, almost the only one that does not "brighten as it takes its flight" is a public dinner!

The fearful wreck of every edible upon the table bore witness to the comfortable conviction, that neither excessive joy at Cæsar's liberty, or grief for his brethren in bonds, had affected the appetites of our philanthropists! Indeed, had the multitude been twice as glad at Cæsar's arrival, they could not possibly have eaten twice as much! But they had made themselves as comfortable as they could at their own expense, and as David said, if that did not arouse the South to a sense of their sin, he did not know what would!

The crowd, weary with surfeiting and confusion, began to disperse. As Stanton slipped his fee into the willing palm of the landlord, he took occasion to say that he was no longer responsible for Cæsar's bills, and that he would do well to exercise a timely regard to his own interests in that respect. A second hint was not required by the wary landlord, who, watching his opportunity, fastened his distinguished guest upon no less a personage than the Rev. Mr. Cary himself.

CHAPTER XV.

"There was a painful change."—EVE OF ST. AGNES.

WE now come home to a little domestic matter.

It was not to be expected that the addition to the family of a fat and lazy negro was very agreeable to the clergyman's wife. The quiet and economical manner in which, as that of a poor pastor, the family found it necessary to live, had been rendered more tolerable by the skilful management of Mrs. Cary, who performed her own household labors. The cottage was small but comfortable, and the one "spare bed," which in the country is almost always a miracle of snowy linen and soft feathers, was the only one now in readiness for the sable guest.

Mrs. Cary, with a perplexed brow, when Cæsar was once fairly in the house, and it became necessary to provide for him, beckoned her husband to this little sanctum.

"Only think, my dear, of putting Cæsar in here," she cried, in a tone of vexation.

Mr. Cary glanced at the fresh linen and spotless coverlet, the clean straw matting and gossamer white window drapery ; and it must be confessed it did seem to him to be a kind of profanation.

The two exchanged comical glances.

"But what other arrangement can be made?" asked the wife, anxiously.

"You might put him into Lucy's room, and put Lucy in here," suggested the husband.

"Bless me," cried Mrs. Cary, "the child never could be persuaded to sleep there again so long as she lived ; she is already so afraid of Cæsar that she shuts her eyes to avoid seeing him."

"Well, my dear, fix it to suit yourself," cried the puzzled clergyman, and he returned to his study.

Mrs. Cary bethought her of a vacant room in the rear of the building, in which she satisfactorily prepared lodgings for her guest ; and thither he was escorted to dream over his triumphs. The day following was devoted to village explorations, and Cæsar found himself a very acceptable addition to the group that daily congregated upon the piazza of the Glynn Hotel. He soon discovered also that he was expected to gratify their curiosity to the fullest extent, and that he was petted in proportion to the magnitude and marvellousness of the falsehoods he invented. So Cæsar went on from one suffering to another, until it may be doubted where his experience would have ended, had not Frank Stan-

ton at some critical moments joined the concourse of listeners.

And so day after day passed until the loungers commenced to grow weary of the often repeated stories, and dropped away from the rehearsal. Then Cæsar turned his attention to things indoors, and as a natural result mostly slept the mornings away in the sunny windows of Mrs. Cary's dining room, much to the annoyance of that notable dame.

"Cæsar," she said one morning when he was ensconcing himself in his favorite sunshine, "perhaps you would like to work a little in the garden. There are always weeds to be removed, and my husband finds very little time for such things."

"Dat mighty small garding of your'n, missey," blurted Cæsar, with undisguised contempt; "no gemman would tink of weedin' such garding as dat-are! Missey ought for to see my ole massa's garding! Gor, dat was garding as is a garding!"

"It answers our purpose very well, at all events; I work in it myself sometimes."

"Gor, de Yankees all niggers! Dis chile like for to see his ole missey working round in dat-are way. De Soufern ladies am ladies as is ladies!"

Mrs. Cary bit her lip in silence, and after a little yawning, Cæsar gave himself up to his favorite siesta, with his suspicious-looking head and shoulders upon the dining table.

An hour or two after, Mrs. Cary's quick, firm tread was heard upon the study threshold.

"Mr. Cary, I wish you would have the kindness to step down and get Cæsar out of the dining-room. The odor is perfectly intolerable. He has been dozing upon the table these two hours, and it is my humble opinion his head never was familiar with the sweets of solitude!"

The clergyman gave a little shrug of impatience.

"My dear, you have interrupted a most valuable logical elucidation which I greatly fear me has vanished for good. Could not you have awakened him?"

"He is no visitor of mine," cried the good lady testily, "though I plead guilty to having been poking him for the last half hour with the broom-handle. If he is to remain here much longer, I shall certainly send him into the study; for, as for having him around my cooking apartments, I will not!"

Mr. Cary whistled; and after a little reflection, shuffled down stairs. It is to be confessed that as his eyes fell upon the uncouth, swarthy figure of the sleeping fugitive, a half-framed wish that he was back in the cotton-fields presented itself.

"Cæsar, wake up, sir, the room is wanted for dinner."

The sleeper gave no sign.

"Cæsar," cried the clergyman, more energetically, going a little closer, and punching him with the blunt

end of his pen holder—"Wake up, sir,—do you hear?"

A snort of resentment followed the pointed appeal, and after various elongations of his extremities, not mentioned by Chesterfield as indicative of good breeding, Cæsar rubbed his eyes with his fists and condescended to turn the white of them toward the expectant Mr. Cary.

"Tink a nigger might enjoy his'sef some way or nudder," grunted Cæsar.

"The room is required for dinner, sir," the clergyman repeated sternly. "The dining-room is no place for sleeping. Could you not have gone to your chamber if you required rest?"

"Chamber!" growled Cæsar; "Lor' Gor 'Mighty—dis chile aint use to sleepin in such cubbey-hole as dat-ar'e."

"Am I to understand that you find fault with your lodging-room, sir?" demanded the master of the house, testily.

"Yah! yah!" laughed Cæsar insultingly, "dis chile knows what am what. Haint lib all he life mong gemman as is gemman fur nurthin!"

"Well, sir, let me tell you that your accommodations are the best I can give you, and even better than I can continue to bestow, unless you are willing to cast off your sluggishness, and give us a helping hand. There is a cord of wood at the door, and if you prefer

to exercise, you can amuse yourself by sawing and splitting it."

Cæsar's eyes dilated.

"Dis chile didn't come norf to be made a nigger of. Dis free land, I spose!"

"But you must understand, Cæsar, that labor is honorable at the North. You can enjoy freedom, it is true, but not its blessings without industry. I labor myself."

"Tink dat!" snorted Cæsar, rolling his eyes insultingly over the somewhat seedy exterior of the clergyman. "Gemmans as is gemmans, 'pears like gemmans as is gemmans."

The blood rushed hot and tingling to Mr. Cary's cheek, and for an instant his lips quivered with resentment. But suppressing his anger, the clergyman turned upon his heel and wended his way to the study.

Mrs. Cary, to repress her resentment laid the dinner table in the kitchen. The domestic atmosphere was evidently becoming hazy. Cæsar, in the meanwhile, amused himself by making faces at little Lucy, whenever he could do so unseen, occasionally pulling her upon his knees, and smothering her with kisses, which so terrified and disgusted the child, that she avoided him, as she would the plague of Egypt. When she complained of these grievances, and Mrs. Cary kindly remonstrated with Cæsar, thinking that it was his color

and uncouthness that had offended her daughter, Cæsar grew malicious, and hating the child, drove her half frantic with persecutions. She came to fear him, too, and durst not betray him, as she had at first done, so that unwittingly she grew peevish and nervous, clinging to her mother by day, and shrieking with terror when left alone for the night.

It chanced one day, that Mrs. Cary sat sewing between the mirror and Cæsar, and looking up casually, detected the fellow in the very act of distorting his



face so hideously, that for the instant, her own terror petrified her. Glancing at Lucy, she beheld her rigid and pale, staring at him with a kind of stony fascination, more fearful to encounter than the distortions of the negro. To clasp the child in her arms and bear her to the study, was the work of an instant, and then the good woman's wrath broke forth.

"Mr. Cary, we may as well understand each other first as last. Either Cæsar or Lucy must leave the house. I have borne with his insolence as long as respect to you or duty to my family will allow," and Mrs. Cary poured forth such a chapter of grievances as startled the clergyman with fears for her sanity.

Lucy still limp and pallid bore full testimony to all she suffered, and now that she felt certain of safety, told of a thousand annoyances of which her parents never dreamed.

Mr. Cary listened in silent indignation.

"You may bring Cæsar here," he said, at last, in a low voice; and the man was brought.

But no sooner did Cæsar catch a glimpse of the group within, than comprehending his dilemma, he clasped his hands upon his sides, and howling with pretended anguish, threw himself helplessly into Mrs. Cary's sewing chair. Now this sewing chair had been the gift of a dear deceased friend, and was, beside, the only bit of elegance, which adorned the parsonage; a small black walnut in gothic style, and quite too deli-

cate for "coarser souls." When, therefore, the distraught monster transferred his theatricals to that seat of empire, he reckoned without his host, for no sooner did he come in contact with the dainty damask, than the treacherous legs gave way, and Cæsar lay "around loose."

The pangs of the poor fellow's abdomen and their accompanying contortions, which he had designed to have identified with those that had so frightened the child, were instantly allayed by the ruin he had wrought, and he sprang to his feet protesting "dat dam chair broke he own dam sef." Mrs. Cary darted a glance at her good man, which seemed to implicate him as the author of all her evils, and banging the door behind her, left the two lords alone in their glory.

Mr. Cary picked up the wreck of what he knew to be the pride of his wife's heart, with a deep sigh of despair; and sat down to look at Cæsar, which he did in such a pensive, studious, despairing manner, that the latter intuitively comprehended the contempt and pity of the mute expression.

Mr. Cary's first impulse had been to order him from the house, but as he gazed into the sullen and stupid face before him, his heart softened toward what he considered so fine a specimen of the total depravity of man. He is, he thought, but one of the vast family of that unfortunate race whom we have undertaken to

rescue from bondage. Their salvation must be effected individually, and perhaps to me is to be given this man's most precious soul for keeping.

As these thoughts revolved themselves in the clergyman's mind, he asked himself, what was his own individual duty toward this sable brother whom Providence seemed designedly to have intrusted to his care. Should he faint upon the very threshold of the effort? And if he cast him out as a graceless vagabond, who could he expect would befriend him. Beside all this, would not the world laugh him to scorn for failing to practise his own precepts?

Mr. Cary thought and whistled, and whistled and thought.

"Cæsar," he said solemnly, "what has my little daughter done, that you should persecute a child of her tender years. Do you not know how easily children can be ruined in body and intellect by unduly exciting their fears?"

It was impossible to discover, by the man's face, whether he even understood the mild language addressed to him, certainly he condescended to give no intimation verbally, that he did!

"Answer me, Cæsar. Why did you frighten my child?"

"Lor' Gor 'Mighty, Massa Cary, hope you don't tink dis nigger go for to frighten dat blessed cherubim? I'se berry' much 'flicted wid de win' colic;

my blessed mudder had it her own sef, an' when she die, dis was all de poor woman lef' me. Oh, Lor'! I'se gwoin into it agin for sartin!" and embracing the portion of his corporeal system which had been so fatally endowed by maternal affection, Cæsar hugged, and yelled, and rolled up his eyes, until the clergyman bent over him with undisguised alarm.

"Oh, Gor!" cried Cæsar, as the temporary pangs subsided, and he withdrew one arm to fan himself with his hand, "just to tink of agonizing like dat-ar', and den be 'cused of going fur to frighten dat angel chile!"

It was impossible for the unsophisticated witness of this impromptu attack, to decide satisfactorily, whether the agonizing was real or fictitious, but as he was himself a dyspeptic and no small victim to flatulency, he was rather inclined to the opinion that Cæsar had lavished an extra amount of groans upon a small capital of mind. When, therefore, the unfortunate sufferer thought fit to recover, Mr. Cary lost no time in returning to his original accusation.

"Whether you intentionally alarmed my child or not, I wish you to distinctly understand, that she must not be disturbed again. Beside, Mrs. Cary is not accustomed to having any one in her kitchen or dining-room, and would prefer you would sit in your own room."

Cæsar here broke in with a groan or two, and an evident inclination to renew his distortions.

"And furthermore, Cæsar, if you remain in our house, you must share in the labor of the household. My salary is very small, and as you perceive, we all share in the burdens of the family. I wish to do for you all that I can do wisely, and as a Christian, but I cannot distress my family to serve you, or squander the small means at my command. I would like you to work in the garden, cut my wood, and do such errands and chores as will assist my wife. It seems to me you cannot but be willing to do this."

Cæsar sat dog-eyed and sullen, without even pretending to listen.

Mr. Cary spoke more warmly.

"I shall make inquiry for you that you may obtain employment in some reliable family, where you can be paid for your labor; as soon as such an opening is found, I shall expect you will leave us willingly?"

"Dis nigger didn't come norf to work, no how; get work enuf at de souf;" cried Cæsar indignantly.

"But you must work or starve; liberty is nothing, unless you can be clothed and fed."

"Dis chile got clothed and fed at the souf, and wan't twitted of it nudder," growled Cæsar. "Lor', wish you could eat one of Dinah's hoe-cakes, dem's fixins as is fixins!"

"And let me add, Cæsar, that for your own sake

more than mine, you must give up this profane use of holy names, 'Swear not at all.' "

"Lor' Gor 'Mighty ! dis nigger nebber swear in all he born days. Hope to drop down dead dis blessed minit if I ebber—"

"Cæsar," cried Mr. Cary, despairingly, "is it possible you do not understand that the words you have just repeated are used profanely? 'Thou shalt not 'take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' You have a precious soul to be saved or lost, and how can you take the sacred name of your final Judge upon your lips so lightly?"

"Boff!" snorted Cæsar, with an evident disrelish of the subject.

"I beg you, Cæsar, now that Providence has released you from slavery—"

"Providence hadn't nurthin to do about it; it was jus' dem cussed abolitioners, and dat is fact, Massa Cary."

Mr. Cary groaned. It was evident he had indeed fallen upon fallow ground. "Cæsar, all gifts are from God! He has doubtless some motive in releasing you from a cruel task-master."

"Nebber heard any nigger, black or white, call my ole massa cruel task-massa afore. He was a gemman as is a gemman."

"Why did you leave him, then?" asked Mr. Cary a little testily.

"Oh, Lor only knows, coz I was seduced I spect, Sambo he heard as how dat pussens up norf didn't work only when dey had mind ; now dis chile nebber had a mind, and so I was seduced."

"Well, Cæsar, as I was saying, you are now a free man, and as you will have to act for yourself, you must learn to think for yourself, too. Your advancement at the North will depend upon your good behavior. You must be civil and respectful in your manners ; you must not swear, and you must labor, whether you wish to or not, for if you are idle, you will fall into bad habits that will ruin you ; beside, as I said before, you must be clothed and fed, and endeavor to become a blessing to the community."

As the listener remained silent, the good clergyman, warmed in his zeal, and launched forth in an eloquent dissertation upon the blessings of liberty, and closed by a most fervent religious exhortation, beneath which Cæsar groaned and squirmed out his impatience in vain. When in the path of duty, Mr. Cary was not to be surpassed in persistency, and if Cæsar was not awakened to a due sense of his depravity it was certainly from no omission in the exhortation.

A little while after Cæsar's dismissal from the study, Lucy came running breathlessly in, protesting that she had seen her grandfather's seal in the negro's hand. This seal was a curious antique, much valued by the clergyman, and kept upon his study table as a curi-

osity, and very dear remembrancer of his lost parent. A glance at the table showed it to be missing from its accustomed place, and the clergyman darted after his daughter with more alacrity than he had been known to exercise in his life.

Cæsar was standing by the shed, as Mr. Cary coming up, demanded the seal.

"Nebber see no seal, whatsomebber. Hope to drop down dead dis blessed minute if I did. Hope massa Cary wouldn't tink dat a collered pussen of veracity would go fur to be stealin' when mass' Cary was a talkin' to him about he sins. Dis chile is a poor debbil, dat sartin; but he tank his Lor' Gor 'Mighty, he aint so wicked as dat-ar'!"

"But Lucy saw it in your hands. It is a relic of my dear departed father; I used to play with it when a boy, sitting on his knee, and he gave it to me with his own dying hand. Cæsar, I would not lose it for the world. Return it to me; I promise you to excuse the theft."

But Cæsar was injured innocence itself, and he "spected it was all fur to destroy his character" that the accusation was got up.

The quick eyes of the child had all the while been following the movements of Cæsar, and noticing a little spot of freshly dug sand by his feet, with a child's intuitive fondness for digging, she commenced excavating a sand cellar. Not half a dozen handfuls had

been tossed out, when a cry of delight burst from Lucy's lips. The seal had been uncovered.

The malicious glance that darted upon the child from the negro's eyes was not unnoticed by the father. He took her with him to the study, and sat down to cogitate upon the delights of personal experience in redeeming the slave.

His home, which two weeks before had been an Eden of domestic felicity, was converted into a Pandora's box of evil. His own quiet of soul and body was at an end; his wife was fretted beyond that amiable woman's powers of endurance. Lucy was victimized, until she scarcely bore a semblance of her former self, and all this was endured for the good of one, who seemed not to be capable of one sensation of gratitude in return.

Was he in the path of duty? that was the question. Here was his hobby, beautifully illustrated. There were three millions more to be christianized. Mr. Cary grew faint in thinking of it.

The clergyman took his hat, and after suggesting to his wife the propriety of watching Cæsar, and especially of keeping Lucy under her own eye, he sallied forth on a round of parochial visits, vowing inwardly, that he would not return until he had disposed of his sable guest.

CHAPTER XVI.

"From the dejected state in which he is,
He hopes by you his fortunes yet may flourish."

PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE.

MR. CARY called upon Deacon A and Deacon B and Deacon C, but although the families were full of inquiries about the past history and "capacities" of the negro, not one of them could be persuaded to take him home. Mrs. A protested she could never eat a mouthful of food with such a repulsive face at the table. Mrs. B thought her children "would be frightened into fits," and Deacon C frankly owned that, although he was glad the man had escaped, he did not feel called upon to support him, though he said he had no objection to giving him "fifty cents or so!"

Very despairingly Mr. Cary turned toward Miss Dickey. David was hoeing in the garden as the clergyman came up, and seeing him advance, struck his hoe into the ground, pulled off his blue overalls, seized the hoe handle with both hands, leaping over it with a "Summerset" which brought him to the gate!

"Fie, David," cried the clergyman, "are you never to leave off these buffooneries?"

"Why, you see, sir," cried David, opening the gate with his profoundest bow, "my head is heavy and my heels light, and so my feet are always getting over my head."

"I do not know what should make your head so heavy, David."

"Oh, if I had died young, it would have been known, sir."

Mr. Cary, who was too familiar with the fooleries of the "blasted" David to heed his utterance, acknowledged a reference to "Amalgamation Sermons," with an impatient wave of the hand, and was soon oblivious of it in the gratification arising from Miss Dickey's very cordial reception.

The conversation naturally glided toward Cæsar's advent. Miss Dickey was positive he must have descended from a very distinguished personage by that name, whose head she had frequently seen upon medallions. The relationship, she thought, must be "quite distant," but still she fancied she could not be mistaken in the resemblance! The brows in the one case were always encircled with a laurel wreath, which gave perhaps a more classic contour to the head; still there was certainly a "family likeness."

Mr. Cary thought it possible, but not probable. He

was no physiologist, however, and was willing to abide by the fair orphan's decision.

Miss Dickey replied that her greatest delight was in clambering up genealogical trees, and when she came across a distinguished stranger, she could not rest until she had investigated his relationship.

The desperate Mr. Cary caught at the idea.

"Perhaps, Miss Dickey, you would like to have Cæsar as a guest for a few days. We do not wish to be selfish, and monopolize him at the expense of our neighbors."

Miss Dickey blushed.

"Really," she said, "she had thought of inviting him, but being an orphan, and having no one to shield her from temptation and scandal, she did not know as it would be entirely proper!"

Mr. Cary coughed. "He saw no objection," he said;



• The authentic Portrait of Cæsar as he appeared to Miss Dickey.

"David was usually with her. Beside, he saw no reason why she should deprive herself of acquaintances or social pleasures, so innocent of themselves, through fear of comment."

David, who had been listening silently to the conversation, directly caught glimpses of fun in the ascendant, and urged the invitation with unusual zeal.

"Now, aunt Julia, do for once be a little more independent! What a splendid chance it would be! Who knows but what he is the prince royal of some island! at any rate," he added, with an expressive leer toward the clergyman, "you would find in him a 'kindred spirit.'"

The fair Julia still questioned the propriety. "If any thing should happen," she said. "Beside, it had always been her motto, that young ladies should be 'above suspicion!'"

Mr. Cary encouraged, and David avowed his willingness to watch over her by day and by night, until the orphan's sensitiveness gradually melted away, and David was allowed to return with Mr. Cary for the purpose of bringing him.

As Miss Dickey had not encountered Cæsar since the day of the "reception," upon which occasion she adorned him with her muse and roses, she felt her virgin heart fluttering with pleasing expectation as the moments flew by. She twined the cork-screw ringlets afresh, and decked the little parlor with flowers, placed

her Album conspicuously upon the table, and went out into the garden to await the arrival.

When David returned, bearing himself the little bundle that contained Cæsar's "earthly all," he found his orphan aunt pensively reclining beneath an arch of Morning Glories, with a volume of the "Children of the Abbey" in her hand, and her small gray eyes raised sentimentally toward the western horizon.

The little start of surprise with which she received them was charmingly natural, and the twilight passed very sentimentally in the garden, where the orphan, leaning upon the arm of her dusky friend, invited him to "meander."

And thus easily was Cæsar settled in a new home. He was now in high clover! The attentions of the fair Julia were delicate and unceasing; while David plied him with flatteries, and encouraged him in all possible absurdity.

The discovery that Cæsar could not read was bitter but inevitable; David pronounced it "scandalous;" nor did he rest until, having brushed the dust from an ancient Webster's spelling book in the attic, Miss Dickey had taken it upon herself to instruct Cæsar in the art of letters.

It was the most affecting sight in the world, David said, to see that friendless orphan sitting upon the door step, under the clematis vine, giving that "young idea" the customary lesson in orthographical gunnery. Cæ-

sar's progress was not encouraging, but the faithful Julia persevered assiduously.

Nor were the efforts of the fair Julia confined simply to Cæsar's intellectual advancement. She bestirred herself in the Carcan African's Friend Society for the replenishing of his wardrobe, and Cæsar rejoiced in a new suit of clothes, a great deal of coarse and badly made linen, to say nothing of sentimental keepsakes of wrought bookmarks, Chinese slippers, and whimsical pincushions! He was Miss Dickey's constant companion, and not unfrequently when the virtuous Julia issued from the homestead leaning upon the arm of Cæsar, he would mentally exclaim,—

“Lor' Gor 'Mighty! how dem yaller gals would roll dar eyes wid bustin' enby, if dey could see dis chile jes' dis 'ticular p'int!”

It is scarcely wonderful if Cæsar began to regard the “plantation” as being within his reach. His arrogance grew also, and the mercurial David himself began in a little while to weary of the insolence which the negro thought proper to assume toward him.

So earnestly, however, did the fair orphan “live up” to some of her beliefs, that it is not possible to say where her amalgamation would have ended, if an apparently trifling circumstance had not given a sudden turn to affairs, and brought into conflict the several predilections of her maiden life, forcing a premature choice between them.

David had a fancy for dabbling in some simple chemical elements, and had on one occasion tried the effect of a preparation of phosphorus upon the fair surface of Cæsar's face and hands, and that to the no small terror of Cæsar himself. Subsequently, anxious to dispossess the colored worthy of the idea that he had bewitched him, David attempted one day, as soon as darkness rendered his experiments visible, to explain the nature and effects of phosphorus, and closed his lecture with the very gratifying trick of bathing his face, hands and hair with the phosphorated oil, and giving chase to poor Cæsar, who, being frightened out of his few remaining senses, flew from him as if he had been beleaguered by demons ; David groping after him with his fiery clutches waving to and fro, all the while throwing off sparks and stars of what seemed to the superstitious pupil to be the genuine blue flames of the hottest of places.

Poor Cæsar, like the righteous Lot, staid not to look behind him, but rushing hither and thither, finally turned toward the house to seek the common refuge of his sleeping room ; when, as his evil genius would have it, Lord Mortimer, with the propensity that all household pets possess of getting directly under foot, was taking his evening siesta upon the warm flag of the door sill. Lord Mortimer, belonging to that unfortunate class of animated clay which always awakens in bad humor, besides having from the first become Cæ-

sar's most formidable enemy, and possessed naturally of the canine instinct to follow that which seems to fly, immediately sprang to his feet, and snapping with fierce ivories upon the intruder's "long-tailed blue," raised the most hideous signal of alarm. Cæsar gave the four-footed Lord a blow upon the head ; that, however, only changed the attack from the long-tailed blue to its owner's almost equally long heel ; and Cæsar in this new agony lifted up his voice and yelled to the utmost capacity of his lungs.

Now as it happened, the amiable Julia, attracted by the first noise, had arrived upon the scene just in season to see the blow fall upon the regal caput of her adored Mortimer. She was attacked in her tenderest point, and rushed fiercely forward, with what purpose perhaps she scarcely knew ; but Cæsar, hurt and desperate from terror, assumed the worst, and fled headlong into his chamber, and locking his door, dove between the sheets as the surest place of refuge from such accumulated persecutions !

"But where can weary man find rest ?" where, indeed, when not even here was our sable hero allowed to repose in peace !

The miserable Euphemia, a cat destitute of a single redeeming virtue, had the intolerable propensity, in common with other pet cats, of depositing herself upon all sorts of comfortable beddings. Usually she purred the nights away upon the foot of her mistress' mattress,

but upon this particular occasion she had thought proper to vary the performances by depositing herself between the sheets of the outraged Cæsar !

Like Lord Mortimer, she had been aristocratically inclined, bristling up her fur and spitting out her venom at Cæsar's appearance ! And now, when her ladyship was dreaming of gallantries and feline triumphs, to be unceremoniously aroused by the weight of a frightened Sambo was beyond the forbearance of all cats, to say nothing of this particular Euphemia !

Without waiting to parley, Miss Euphemia therefore planted her malicious claws upon the only available portion of the intruder's person, and seizing his nose between her teeth, proceeded to test its elasticity by a process that for a moment made Cæsar suspend his breath in any thing but admiration. The sweat of mortal fear was upon Cæsar, and catching Mademoiselle's body with a grasp that suddenly caused the relinquishment of her hold, he dashed her beautiful head completely flat with one blow against the bedpost.

The one yell of the shattered Euphemia was not uttered in vain !

The auricular sensitiveness of a maiden lady when the interests of her pets are concerned is not to be surpassed ! Calling David to her aid, the two immediately went to the rescue, and Cæsar was called upon to rise, stand, and deliver, which he absolutely refused to do in language which we do not care to repeat. It was only

when Julia withdrew, and David was left to negotiate, that Cæsar listened to reason, and allowed the fate of the miserable Euphemia to be investigated by candle-light !

Cæsar himself was not a whit less bloody than his enemy, and as David glanced from one to the other, and became sensible to the elegant etchings Euphemia had left upon the ebony visage, the scene was so indescribably ludicrous that poor David, regardless of Cæsar's wounds, and of the void this violent death would create in his aunt's breast, sent up such a peal of merriment that Julia again rushed to the sanguinary scene ! But, alas ! no sooner had her gray eyes rested upon the hapless Euphemia, all stark and gory, than

"Down fell the lovely damsel
All like a slaughtered lamb !"

David chivalrously received the drooping figure, and speedily recalled her to consciousness by rehearsing the causes of Euphemia's untimely end ! The scene of mutual recrimination that followed defies description. The orphan was borne to her room in hysterics, while Cæsar cursed the hour of his "seduction," and heaped anathemas upon all the conductors of underground railroads !

It was past midnight when David had succeeded in restoring his aunt's nervous equilibrium ; and having seen her made comfortable for the night, returned to solace the disconsolate Cæsar.

The day following, the body of Euphemia was deposited beneath a favorite rose tree, and Cæsar was given to understand that his days of favor were numbered.

David, when he discovered that his merriment was at an end, and being well aware of the sarcasm already attached to his aunt's attentions to Cæsar, understood the propriety of having his transfer appear to be the result of accident. He went therefore to suggest to Mr. Hobbs the propriety of receiving him as a laborer upon his farm. The idea being an economical one was sufficiently agreeable, and David returned to announce the transfer to the sable guest.

The parting between Julia and Cæsar was more impressive than tender.

"He tank his Lor' Gor 'Mighty dat he shake de dus' ob dat cussed housen off his feet;" while she, with more dignified contempt, suspiciously watched his parting movements, as if expecting to lose half of her worldly gear. It was afterwards surmised that several missing articles had been appropriated by him as keepsakes, but as Julia had her own reasons for silence, she faithfully kept his secret.

CHAPTER XVII.

"It is a basilisk unto mine eye—
Kills me to look on't."—CYMBELINE.

MR. and Mrs. Hobbs received our hero with very little ceremony, and with coarse good nature. He was at once ordered to the field as a matter of course, where day after day he labored side by side with the master of the house, mingling freely with the family, sitting at their table, and sharing the chit-chat of the sitting-room, where the family congregated when the duties of the day were over. He was considered their equal, and treated as such. Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs, as we have said, had from the first espoused Mr. Cary's amalgamation theories with the utmost sincerity. They believed the negro to be their equal, physically and mentally. They had no fastidious refinements to be shocked by his peculiarities, and he was as agreeable a companion to them as if he had been of their own kith and kin.

But there was a third member of this family, to whom Cæsar's arrival was a precursor of evil, and this was no other than the pretty Mary, of whose sweet

face the reader has already caught glimpses as he has followed the lights and shadows of Minden life.

Mary Hobbs, as she was always called, was not the child of the coarse couple with whom she lived, and whose name she bore. They had no children, and after a manner not uncommon in their line of life had adopted from a neighboring charitable institution—partly to supply the natural want they felt, and partly to act as a little servant—this girl, and with them she had grown up from childhood, the sweetest wild flower that fate ever cast upon the bosom of charity.

Of the manner of her advent to the "Poor Farm," or whose child she was, they knew nothing, and cared quite as little.

With all her external grace and delicacy, this charming waif inherited that exquisite love of the beautiful, and innate shrinking from contact with all forms of repulsiveness, which almost always is the natural endowment of such frail and pensive sweetness of form and face. She loathed the very atmosphere that Cæsar breathed, and shrank from him as she would from the infection of a pestilence. The food upon the table became unpalatable in his presence, and she shrank away from the seat which was allotted her by his side, until the jeers and taunts, and lastly the commands of her foster-parents obliged her to resume it.

His daily civilities, so long as they were confined to exchanges of such little attentions as naturally arise in

domestic intercourse, were endured because they were necessary ; but when Cæsar's familiarity ripened into admiration, and he dared to cast his eyes upon her as one whom he might regard as a companion, poor Mary grew almost frantic in her intolerance, and loathed him with an intensity that fairly inspired her fragile person.

It would seem impossible that her foster-parents should remain impassive to her complaints, or reject the poor child's pleadings to be delivered from a presence so obnoxious to her. But as Mrs. Hobbs found the sable guest sufficiently congenial to meet her own approval, and having through the utter want of sympathy between them, finally come to consider the poor girl as a burdensome comfort, tolerated because she could not now be gotten rid of, she had at first regarded the child's likes or dislikes with entire indifference ; and as Cæsar grew almost importunate, and Mary, after pleading in vain for an intercession her parents declined to give her, took it upon herself to repulse and avoid him upon every occasion, in the most emphatic manner, both by her behavior and language, Mrs. Hobbs became irritated by this assumption of daring to act without her sanction, joined with Cæsar, and there were two parties in this household upon this very peculiar matter.

Mr. Hobbs, although a trifle more cultivated than his wife, was yet incapable of seeing any impropriety in the association of these two. As for love, it was an

obsolete notion ; he did not fancy it existed out of novels. He had married Mrs. Hobbs because she made good butter and cheese, and was evidently of an economical turn ; but had another made butter and cheese better than Mrs. Hobbs, he would most certainly have preferred that other.

Cæsar, he said, was a good worker ; he accomplished more labor in a day than he did himself, and that was a compliment he would bestow upon few. The man was well enough for aught he saw, and there was no economical consideration to induce him to keep Mary at home. Beside, Mr. Hobbs had all his life been thirsting for office ; it was his hobby, an honor for which he had angled day and night, and which seemed to be floating almost within his reach. He was the abolition aspirant for the laurels of second representativeship ! Nothing, he fancied, would so ingratiate him into the favor of his party, as this signal exposition of his principles ! Had Mary been his own daughter, he would have sacrificed her upon this altar of his ambition. His wife had all her life fancied that to be the wife of a representative was the embodiment of all earthly aggrandizement. They had labored with one heart and mind for the realization of this *éclat*, and now, when the hopes of party spirit seemed concentrating upon Mr. Hobbs as the most zealous exponent of the abolition platform, and the bubble was within his

grasp, every energy was concentrated upon the attainment of the prize.

Week after week poor Mary struggled with the unnatural persecution, until her cheek grew pale, and her eyes sunken with weeping. She had never mingled very freely with other families of the village, partly because Mrs. Hobbs herself was not much sought after by her neighbors, partly because she had always been a kind of domestic drudge in the family in which she was adopted, and also because she was so sensitive and shy, and found so little congeniality in the less morbid temperaments of the village maidens, that she preferred the exclusiveness that left her free to enjoy her own emotions without comment. When, therefore, Mary found herself unhappy, and greatly needing some reliable friend whose counsels might be of service in extricating her from her dilemma, she became painfully conscious that possibly not a single being in Minden cared sufficiently for her happiness to interest themselves in her trials. She hardly knew why, but she could not bring herself to speak of her troubles to Frank Stanton. The attentions of Cæsar and the persecutions of her foster-parents almost degraded her in her own eyes, and she dreaded lest Stanton would loathe her too, when her name was associated with Cæsar's. Then, too, their intercourse had been so limited, his attentions so delicately bestowed, and so reservedly received upon her part, that she felt it impossible to give him her con-

fidence unsolicited. Her heart warmed more naturally towards our old acquaintance, "Nannie," than to any other; but she knew that she could only escape from her present embarrassments by flying from her foster-parents' roof, and her confidence in Nannie would be virtually asking her to become responsible for her future home. There was a fondness, too, in her heart, for the only parents she had ever known; it was her nature to love every thing with which she came in contact that was in the least lovable, and she could not think of a final separation from her childhood's home with indifference.

A thousand objections presented themselves to the mind of the young girl whenever she became restive under her grievances, until she resumed her burdens again, trusting to time and chance to relieve her of Cæsar's importunities.

It was during one of these despairing moods that she had stolen away from the home drudgery to solace herself with the solitary indulgence of her own sad thoughts. Close by the river side was a shaded nook, sacred to her from the earliest hour of her remembrance, and thither she strolled for the indulgence of her sorrows.

To her surprise the haunt was preoccupied, and that too by no other than Frank Stanton himself, evidently absorbed in the perusal of a letter which lay open before him. Mary turned quickly aside, but her step,

light as it was, had betrayed her ; Stanton sprang to his feet.

"Excuse me, Miss Mary," he said, detaining her, "I am so glad you have come ; I was going myself to see you, to bid you good-bye," he added, sadly, as he saw her unwillingness to remain.

The little word fell like a knell upon her ear, and she instinctively repeated it, as her blue eyes sought his face inquiringly.

"Yes, Mary, I am going home ; my father has sent for me, and his orders are peremptory."

The color faded slowly from the young girl's cheek, and the long lashes drooped lower and lower over the tell-tale eyes that she durst not raise to his face.

There was a long and embarrassing silence.

"You can have little to regret in leaving our quiet country, Mr. Stanton ; but your friends will be sorry to give you up."

"And you, Mary ? Is this little acquaintance all we shall ever see of each other ?" It was said sadly, as if the thought were painful to the speaker. Overburdened as her poor heart was with its concealed bitterness, it is no wonder that she felt the hot tears rushing to her relief. The long lashes drooped lower still, while she shaded her face from his earnest gaze.

"Shall you never return here again ?—never ?" she asked at last, tremulously.

Unfortunately her downcast eyes did not read in the

handsome face before her the great struggle for self-command that was visible there. She heard only the reply that fell from his lips with what seemed to her longing heart a cold and unimpassioned voice.

"I cannot tell, Mary; perhaps not until those I have known and loved here are changed or lost to me forever."

Sad as was the tone with which these words were uttered, there was a reservedness about them that sent a chill to her sensitive heart, and the innate pride of her sex was aroused.

"Let me hope, then, you may be successful and happy, Mr. Stanton, in the future, and let me bid you good-bye."

She extended her hand in her old quiet, smiling way. Frank took it between both of his, pressed it reverentially to his lips; and almost before he was aware of her intention, she had glided away.

He called her passionately by name, for a moment pursuing her, but she only fled from him the faster, until, irritated with himself and her, he saw her disappear within the old farm house.

It was well that the interview had so ended, and Stanton said so to himself as he lay despairingly upon the green turf, and hid his quivering face in his hands. For, after all, what had he, with such family surroundings as his, to hope from a sickly attachment to this frail Northern flower, which his father

would bid him trample under his feet as unworthy a throb of his heart? Besides, his life was but just opening upon the ambitious career his father had marked out for him; and he understood his own wayward moods sufficiently well to know that his impressible nature might be decoyed from its allegiance to the pensive Mary long before he would be at liberty to espouse her. Indeed, he knew that even did his own heart remain faithful to her, it was a union his parents would never sanction, and he must cling to the one with the loss of family and fortune.

To what purpose, then, should he seek to disturb the even tenor of her young life? Ought he, for his own selfish gratification, to seek her for a more tender parting, which might deceive her with false hopes, although it could not deceive her in regard to the real tenderness of his own heart? True, he left her to struggle with an existence which to him appeared a thousand times worse than death, inasmuch as her home was so bleak and drear that her own loveliness seemed utterly misplaced. But then it was the only home she had ever known, and with which she had always seemed satisfied; she would always live on as she had lived, until some more fortunate lover should transplant her to bloom upon his own breast; and after all, impossible as the thought then seemed, Mary might live and die more happily than if she had become his bride.

And so, hour after hour, Stanton lay upon the green

grass, his face still buried in his hands, struggling to reconcile his heart to his judgment, and disciplining his affection to sacrifice itself to the interest of its idol ! It was a noble, unselfish heart that could thus struggle in silence, when the object of its intense passion could be had for the asking. He knew that, and yet not for a lifetime of bliss would he have brought one pang to her heart. His face was whiter than the clouds above him when he arose from the place upon which, like Jacob, he had "wrestled and prevailed."

"Oh, Mary !" he cried, as he lingered upon the spot where they parted ; "how many, many times your feet will rest upon this sod, and yet no voice will arise from it to bear witness to the purity of a love that can thus sacrifice you !"

He extended his arms passionately toward the old farm-house, as if yearning for a final embrace ; flung them wildly aloft as if invoking the blessing of heaven upon his idol ; and the next morning, before the village was astir, Frank Stanton was homeward bound.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Abashed she blushed, and with disorder spoke."—PRIOR.

It was late in the afternoon of the following day, that Mary, as she leaned moodily against one of the tall stiff poplars that adorned her home, saw Squire Bryan approaching, with the evident intention of addressing her. Her first impulse was to avoid him; her second, to sink upon the wooden bench, from which she had arisen, and pressing her hands nervously together, await his wishes.

Squire Bryan threw himself by her side, and his crutch at her feet.

"I am rather old to be made a medium for romantic young men, but Stanton went off in such a hurry, Miss Mary, he said he had not time to do his errand himself. He wished me to take over some volumes of poems which he thought you might like to keep as remembrancers of olden times, and some other knick-nacks which he fancied might not be unacceptable. Take witness, therefore, that I have faithfully fulfilled

the mission." And the Squire relieved his pockets of sundry packages, without once glancing towards her. Indeed, he seemed absorbed in examining the five tall poplars, that rose so prime and stiff before the farmhouse, and which he protested looked like five old maids going to church with their hymn books in their hands.

"Mr. Stanton is gone, then?" asked Mary, after the first emotion had subsided. "I was not aware he was to go so soon."

The Squire finished whistling Yankee Doodle before he thought proper to answer.

"Frank, gone? Yes, he was off this morning by the first coach." And here Squire Bryan sighed as if half of his heart had gone with him. "Nannie and I have been roaming from one room to another all day. I do not see just now how we are to get along without him."

"He is not to return, then?" Mary asked, faintly.

"No; I had a letter from his father about the same time with Frank's summons. The old gentleman has got some matrimonial notion into his head, and has recalled Frank to marry him off to some rich fairy, that has dazzled his own eyes. So I suppose the law is not to be thought of again."

Here the Squire resumed his whistling.

The poor girl's cheek paled and crimsoned, and crimsoned and paled, and then her face settled into a

cold stony pallor most frightful to look upon, and all the while Squire Bryan went on whistling, without one glance of pity.

"Mr. Stanton was acquainted with his father's wishes, I suppose," Mary said, in a low, husky voice, after a long silence.

"Oh, yes, of course. Frank knows that whenever he does marry he must marry a rich beauty, and one of family, otherwise his father will cut him off without a shilling. Frank cannot kick against the pricks—the lucky dog has got to have a rich wife in spite of himself. Some people are born so. Are Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs well to-day? By the way, I hear Cæsar has proved to have a very susceptible heart, after all," and Squire Bryan glanced roguishly toward the young girl. For the first time he became sensible of her deadly pallor.

"Bless me," he cried, springing to his feet, "what a ghost you are! Are you ill? Are you faint? Shall I get you a glass of water?" he cried, as Mary continued to shake her head without speaking.

"Go in, then—go in, child—don't sit in the draught under these poplars;" and the Squire placing his hand kindly upon her arm, assisted her to rise, and leading her to the door, bade her take care of herself, and retired.

Mary tottered to her chamber like a sick child, and throwing herself helplessly upon her knees by the bed-

side, kind nature came to her relief, and mercifully shrouded her into momentary forgetfulness. It was here Mrs. Hobbs found her, when, having called in vain, she had gone in pursuit of her.

"You hussy you, why don't you come when I call you? 'Tis a pretty time to be on your knees, when the fire is to be kindled for supper, and you are always wanted. Get up, I say!" and she pulled the girl savagely by the arm. "Luddy Massy! Luddy Massy!" cried the woman, as she became conscious of Mary's insensibility. "Mr. Hobbs! M-i-s-t-e-r H-o-b-b-s! C-æ-s-a-r!" she screamed, wringing her hands in unfeigned alarm. "For Massy's sake come up here this minit! Mary is as dead as a nit!" And Mrs. Hobbs set up a boo-hooing that would have been "illegant" at a wake.

The two men thus touchingly appealed to, came trundling up stairs, but when they had arrived were equally ignorant of what should be done, but stood in the remotest corner of the room, gazing in blank dismay upon the beautiful form kneeling there all unconscious of wrong and suffering!

"How cal-um she looks!" sobbed Mrs. Hobbs, wiping her eyes upon the corner of her apron!

"Clam as de angels of hebben!" whimpered Cæsar, rolling up his eyes, and drawing his finger across his upper lip with an accompanying sniff, while

Mr. Hobbs plunging both hands into his pantaloons pockets stared at her in open-mouthed wonder.

It was only when Mary began to show signs of returning animation that the three bestirred themselves to action. Mrs. Hobbs stifled her with camphor, while Cæsar scorched feathers by the aid of lucifer matches. Mr. Hobbs, who had vainly ransacked the house for a palm-leaf fan, returned with the leathern bellows instead, and like a true son of Vulcan blew with such precision and effect that poor Mary, after an ineffectual struggle to breathe, relapsed into a second and longer swoon, which so frightened the well-meaning executioners that they suspended their efforts and Cæsar was despatched for our kind physician, Dr. Baker, whose benevolent countenance beamed upon Mary's awakening.

The poor girl returned to her old domestic ways, more patient and long-suffering than before, not even shrinking from the attentions of Cæsar, or growing impatient over the selfish exactions of her parents. And yet a painful metamorphosis was going on in the young girl's nature. She became more self-reliant, less timid, and mingled more freely with her acquaintances.

The repose and dignity of soul which in all noble natures springs up from the ashes of despair, came to the support of the hopeless Mary. She became conscious that the fearful alliance that her foster-parents were assuming for her could and should be avoided ;

and many a sleepless night the poor child lay tossing upon her bed, forming scheme after scheme, only to be abandoned as impracticable. It was during one of these night-watches that the image of David Dickey presented itself. His mild good nature and ready wit had been often brought to her rescue, and from her earliest childhood he had been a kind of guardian spirit coming to her relief over the hard sums and copies in her school tasks. She knew at once that if human agency could lift her out of her peril, it would be found in the brawny arms and hearty good will of her old schoolfellow, and her heart leaped with impatience to appeal to him. Some days elapsed before the opportunity presented itself, when tying on her chip hat, she wended her way to Miss Dickey's residence. As she passed the village cemetery, she saw the object of her pursuit leaning thoughtfully upon the stone wall, seemingly absorbed in contemplating the resting-place of the dead, nor was he conscious of her approach until he felt the soft touch of her hand upon his arm.

"Providence is propitious to-day, David, for I came out on purpose to seek you, to give you my confidence," she added, smiling, "and to ask for your aid."

The young man gazed at her inquiringly, and with a strange flushing of his sunburnt face, and motioned for her to sit down beside him.

"No, let us go in," said Mary, opening the wooden

gate ; and, seeking out an old stone beneath the shade of the wall, the two sat down.

"You must be my confidant, David, but you must promise not to betray me."

A little dimness of dissatisfaction passed over David's face.

"If you think me capable of betraying you, you would do better not to confide in me."

"David!" cried Mary, reproachfully, "do not quarrel with me upon the onset. I am too miserable to bear even a jest," and the poor girl burst into tears.

David knew it was no common grief that could so disturb the quiet-hearted Mary.

"Don't weep, Mary; you know me of old to be light of tongue. If I can serve you, speak out freely, and it shall be done."

Mary ceased weeping, and sat with her blue eyes gazing wistfully into his.

"David, do you know any place in the country where I could probably find a situation to do housework or sewing? any thing, indeed, where I could remain unknown and support myself?"

The young man gazed at her as if he half suspected her sanity. "Do you mean that you wish to go out to service?" he asked, in surprise.

"Yes," she said, firmly. "I wish to do any thing that an honest person can do, to be independent. I knew you had been a good deal away, and thought it

more probable you could aid me to a place than any other. I wish to go immediately, and without any one's knowledge."

David hesitated. What could tempt Mary to wish to leave her parents, and how could so delicate a being hope to be able to supply her most common needs by the labor of her hands? He longed to know, and yet durst not question her.

"I could certainly find you a situation with very little effort, but I beg you will first be certain that it is for your interest to leave home."

A painful suspicion flitted through David's brain that her flight had some connection with Frank Stanton's departure. And yet he manfully rejected the implied insult to the poor girl's confidence.

"If you would trust me with your reasons for this strange movement, perhaps we could bring about your wishes without exposing you to all this hardship."

Mary's face flushed crimson, as her eye fell beneath his earnest gaze. Strangely enough she divined the very thought that was passing in David's brain.

"David," she said, speaking out firmly, like one who is conscious of her own integrity, "I will tell you the whole truth. They wish to marry me to Cæsar."

"The devil they do!" cried David, springing to his feet as if a shock of electricity propelled him; and he stood before her with clinched hands and set teeth, glar-

ing into her face, as if the monstrosity were not to be believed.

Mary laughed hysterically, as she gazed at him panting out his indignation. "Do you wonder I wish to go to service now?"

"Is it possible you can be serious, Mary? In the name of Heaven, who could have originated so beastly a design?"

Mary laughed again, more nervously than before. "I believe I am going crazed, David, with this long struggle;" and she gave way again to mingled tears and laughter.

When the two became more calm, and David became familiar with the novel idea, his quick perception discovered at a glance the causes that were operating against her.

"It is a great pity Cæsar did not marry my aunt Julia," cried he, indignantly. "If nothing but amalgamation will suit them, they ought at least to consult the wishes of the bride, and I know that 'Barcus was willing.'"

There was another outbreak of laughing, and as Mary looked into David's happy face, she felt all her burdens vanish.

"Well, we must get rid of Cæsar. Do you stay where you are, and remain passive in their hands—it will be best so, as opposition will only increase their rancor. Trust to me, I never was outwitted yet. And

do not fret so, Mary," he said, looking anxiously into her thin face, "you never shall lack a friend so long as my name is David Dickey! Whether you see me or not, you may rest assured that I am watching over your safety, and when you see your deliverance at hand, you will know I am near."

Mary thanked him again and again, and went home happier than she had come. David, after watching her slight figure receding in the distance, re-entered the gate, and sat down upon the seat she had vacated, plucking at the long grass, and twining the green blades around his fingers. How unlike he seemed, in his sombre reverie, to the thoughtless, giddy-brained nephew of Julia Dickey! He was living over again the sunny remembrances of the old school-house, where he had sat during the cold winter hours, mindful of little else but the pale, sweet face bending over the desk in the corner, whose eyes intuitively turned toward his when the lesson grew burdensome, stealthily holding up the perplexing sum, or slipping across to him the copy-book to which her unaccustomed pen refused to do justice! How he had laden his pockets at his aunt Julia's cupboards, in order that he might surprise her with hidden offerings when she peeped into her desk of a morning! How he had lingered behind his school-fellows to say kind words to her, when she went home apart from the village misses! How valiantly he had defended her rights upon the playground, and knocked

down the "largest boy" for daring to insult her! How he had ransacked the old newspapers, and almanacs, and Readers for tit-bits of adoring poetry, which he copied with the nicest care, and slipped into her hand, or placed between the leaves of her spelling-book! Did he not know, too, every flower that little Mary Hobbs loved? And did he not bring her to see every bird's nest and new brood of aunt Julia's menagerie? In fact, was there any thing that really existed for David, which he considered independent of its connection with Mary's happiness! Then, too, what happy blissful hours they had spent under the old sand hill, scooping out mysterious cavities, and naming them after all sorts of romantic horrors gleaned from their story-books! What bakeries they had instituted, piling up their scalloped tins, and patting their mimic pies and cakes into a perfection unknown beyond the precincts of small-clothes!

Ah! childhood—childhood! the blesseddest thing
That nature ever invented!

And so David went on, plucking the long grasses, and dreaming over his boyhood, until with a long-drawn sigh he cast both grass and memory aside, and passing his rough hand over his sunburnt face, like one dizzy with his awakening—he paused a moment, and went his way.

CHAPTER XIX.

"If by your art you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them."—TEMPEST.

MARY's "engagement" soon came to be rumored abroad. Those of her own sex who should have pitied and counselled better things, ridiculed and abused her, while old men and young men congregated upon the piazza of Glynn's Hotel for no other ostensible purpose but to talk over and compare opinions upon this ridiculous engagement! Their perplexity increased with the frequency of the congregating, until nothing remained to be done but to plunge their arms to the elbows in their pockets, and magnanimously await the result!

The pretty Mary gradually became sensible to the ridicule attached to her position; at first she smiled, and entreated their forbearance with her mute, appealing eyes, trusting that no one could believe her so destitute of all self-respect. But as murmur after murmur reached her, and she felt that her few friends shrank from her as something too debased for common courtesy,

she threw herself at the feet of her foster-parents, and begged them to do her justice.

“If you must disgrace and torture me,” she cried, “make the people conscious that I am the victim, and not the designer!”

“A pretty time of day when sich as you talk to them as has sheltered you ever since your own parents left you, Luddy knows where, about torterin’ you!” cried Mrs. Hobbs, tossing her head scornfully; “didn’t I and Mr. Hobbs take you from the ’sylum where you come a beggarly outcast, that nobody else would take in! and didn’t we go for to clothe, for to feed and for to treat you like our own child, when nobody else would go for to clothe and for to feed you! Says I to Mr. Hobbs, says I that morning, What’s best to do with that ar young un’? Says he to me, says he, I s’pose we must do sumthin’! Says I to him, says I, Perhaps she might grow up to be a great help to us, and her keepin’ can’t cost us much, no how we can fix it! I reckon she would be mighty handy to drive in the geese and hens, and do little chores like. Mr. Hobbs, he stopped and scratched his head a minit, and then says he to me, says he, If you can keep her from squalling night and day, I don’t care what you do with her; and so I and Mr. Hobbs took you in! and a nastier little brat nobody ever see, I guess! And ne-ow after all of this ’ere kindness, here you are talking to I and Mr. Hobbs about torterin’ you! Snooky!”

Mrs. Hobbs' indignation stifled her eloquence, and she stood panting and winking, and gulping down her anger, as her eyes flashed and blazed upon the pale face before her.

"What I should have been without you, Heaven only knows," cried Mary; "but if my condition could have been worse than it is, then God pity me!"

If Mrs. Hobbs' unclassic nostrils had represented the Northern Pole, and the anger which actually flashed from that amiable lady's countenance the electric phenomenon known as the Northern Lights, the pen of a thousand travellers had been vainly worn to the stump in attempting to delineate the magnificence of the coruscations!

Poor Mary cowered before the ominous silence, for she knew but too well that the good dame, like her mother earth, grew intensely breathless while the earthquake within her breast gathered strength and fury! Nor was the young girl mistaken! Vesuvius never vomited forth a more wonderful exhibition of embowelled malignity than came hissing from her foul lips upon the defenceless girl. No epithet was too low, no accusation too absurd, no taunt too gross to escape her, and Mary's crimson face bent like the young sapling low before the storm it could not defy!

The passion of Mrs. Hobbs had just perfected itself in one grand climax of abuse, when the brass knocker suspended upon the front door of Mr. Hobbs' farm-

house announced that the Rev. Mr. Cary was seeking admission to this lamb of his flock.

No sooner was the pastor's voice heard in the hall, than with a denunciatory shake of her clenched fist and an emphatic warning to Mary to "hold her tongue," the lady of the house turned with many smiles and the blandest of faces to receive her visitor. Mary availed herself of the opportunity to escape from her presence, and indulge in the only luxury the poor child had ever known, that of tears!

Gliding from one topic to another, Mr. Cary soon approached the one most occupying his thoughts.

"The rumors of the village do not often reach me, Mrs. Hobbs, but I am told upon good authority that your daughter Mary is encouraging the addresses of Cæsar."

Mrs. Hobbs affected a little smirk of intelligence.

"Every dog must have his day, you know, Mr. Cary."

"Do I understand you to mean that the report is well founded?" asked Mr. Cary, with great surprise in his tone and manner.

"Well, murder will out; I s'pose we must lose Mary sooner or later," and Mrs. Hobbs went on smirking and knitting.

Nothing could surpass the blank astonishment visible in Mr. Cary's face. He did not endeavor to express

his emotions, but he did what he was in the habit of doing when language failed him—he whistled !

“ I and Mr. Hobbs thought rayther queer on’t at first, but there’s no accountin’ for the fancy of gals, and as I and Mr. Hobbs don’t wish to blight Mary, we have given our consent.”

Mr. Cary continued to whistle.

“ I ’spect you’ll have the privilege of jining on ’em ;” Mrs. Hobbs went on smirking more and more. “ I guess we shall have the weddin’ in the meetin’ housen, so to let folks see that we consider all men ‘ free and equal ;’ for my part, I had jest as lief Mary would marry a nigger as to marry any body else, and I hold to folks livin’ up to their profession, any how ! ”

“ Really,” said Mr. Cary, rubbing his hand slowly up and down over the nap of his broadcloth, “ this is the most singular engagement I ever heard of ! Mary is so young and inexperienced, that she probably does not realize the step she is about to take ; of course you are the best judge of what would promote her happiness, but if her fate cannot be averted, it at least should not be hastened by her friends ; she should have time to consider, and Cæsar should be removed from her presence. It is a very singular instance of infatuation—very—singular—indeed ! ” and Mr. Cary resumed his whistling !

Mrs. Hobbs’ knitting-needles flew fast and furious ;

the wedding must precede the election, and the election was fluttering in the breeze of the New Year!

"I don't think it does any good to oppose gals; when I and Mr. Hobbs was a-courtin', every word that was said agin him only made me stick the closer. I kinder reckoned you would be mighty tickled up with the match, Mr. Cary."

Mr. Cary's surprise was renewed.

"Thought I would be pleased with such an alliance, Mrs. Hobbs? It seems to me the very reverse of being desirable. I do not object to Cæsar's color—to the fact that he is a negro—that I know of; but he is very uncultivated, and is not a person in any respect to whom a young girl of Mary's delicate temperament could safely intrust her happiness. I would rather preach her funeral sermon than seal her as his wife."

Mrs. Hobbs' knitting work fell from her hands as she fixed her eyes upon him full of amazement, the least bit tinged with indignation.

"Well neow, if I don't gin it up! Here you've been a-preachin' and preachin' an preachin' about our duty to our colored bretherin', and a-tellin' of us what we orter do to civilize 'em, and a-stirrin' on us up to all sorts of good works, and now, when we've got a bretherin', and are willin' to treat him like a bretherin', you ups and sets your nose agin it! Snooky!"

"But, my dear Madam, I never intended to convey any such ideas as you are practically drawing from my

instructions. I see no reason why the blacks and whites may not intermarry as well as all other nations, but I would have them first released from bondage, and made our equals intellectually and morally ! I would not encourage a young, delicate-minded child like Mary to sacrifice herself to an undue sympathy for Cæsar's former oppression, and I see no other attraction that could have influenced her decision ! ”

“ Wall ! I take folks exactly as they say, and you've said it a thousand times, that we orter treat a nigger as we would a white man, and that we orter marry 'em, and if we can't get 'em away from their masters any other way, we orter dissolve the Union, and set up on our own hook. I s'pose Cæsar is a fair specimen ; at any rate, you've made fuss enough about gettin' him here, and now, when other people want to live up to your preachin', you want to back out ! S-n-o-o-k-y ! ”

This time Mr. Cary both whistled and stroked his broadcloth ; and a long pause followed, broken only by the clicking of the good dame's needles. It was easy to see explanations would but increase the misunderstanding, and Mr. Cary, after due reflection, interested himself in the success of her dairy. But Mrs. Hobbs was not so easily pacified, and the clergyman saw the propriety of beating a timely retreat.

As he was passing the gate he observed Mary shrinking timidly behind a clump of lilacs, and stopped to address her. The girl came forth reluctantly, and it

was evident from her inflamed features that her tears had been freshly flowing. There was something, too, so forlorn and utterly dejected in her drooping figure and pale face, that the good man's heart smote him, and he took her hand tenderly in his, and gazed silently and inquiringly into her tearful eyes.

"My dear child," he said, sympathetically, "answer me truly, is it of your own free will that you encourage the rumored attentions of this man Cæsar? The engagement is so publicly spoken of that I cannot offend you, I am sure, by asking."

Mary struggled to withdraw her hand, and her slight figure expanded with hauteur, as she said, scornfully,

"And if I do, Mr. Cary, I am but living out the theories you have been laboring to inculcate!"

Mr. Cary sighed, but firmly retained her small hand in his.

"Answer me, Mary—yes or no?"

The little touch of pride had vanished—the reproachful sigh was rightly interpreted, and the poor girl bowed her fair head upon her pastor's hand, and gave way to an hysterical outbreak of tears and laughter.

"'Tis so absurd," she said at last, when she could trust her voice, "to have you ask me such a question—you who have known me all my life. How could I tolerate such a ——"

Mary paused, while a shiver of disgust ran through her whole frame.

"Who, then, has originated this repulsive report? your mother even encourages it, and your father also!"

"I speak for myself, Mr. Cary; so far as I am personally concerned, I deny all that you may have heard! My name is to be coupled with no person living, and I am sorry that my past life should not have refuted this scandal without the necessity of a denial."

"Am I to understand, then, that this engagement has been encouraged by your foster-parents contrary to your wishes?"

"You are to understand nothing from me, Mr. Cary, more than I have already said; and I beg you will not question me further;" and the girl again struggled to withdraw her hand.

The clergyman dropped it reluctantly.

"I should be very glad, Mary, to serve you in any manner you could suggest, and so would my wife; you would be heartily welcome at our house as long as you chose to remain there," he added, significantly; "you may rely upon it, you have friends who will never see you sacrificed."

Mary raised her blue eyes with a quick flash of gratitude, but beyond a simple "Thank you, sir," she remained silent.

The clergyman lingered as if unwilling to depart, and yet uncertain what to say, when hearing the shrill

voice of Mrs. Hobbs from within, he invoked the blessing of Heaven upon the poor child and turned away.

"What on arth are you and the minister talkin' about all of this time, Moll?" asked Mrs. Hobbs, suspiciously, appearing at the door; "hey? what was it, hussy?"

"I thought clergymen always talked about religion," answered the girl, evasively.

"It's mighty strange ministers never can talk to young gals without gettin' hold of their hands! They can talk to old women fast enough without going across the room, but when a gal is in the case they work her over just like a lump of butter. They take her hand in their'n, and squeeze it, and pat it, and change it from one hand to the other, and squeeze it and pat it agin, and hang on for dear life like a dog to a bone; but they wouldn't touch an old woman's hand no more than if it was pisin!"

"I suppose they used to work yours over, mother," Mary said, a little maliciously.

"In course they did, and a despirit pretty hand I had, too—fat as butter, and as full of dimples as cherries are of stones," and Mrs. Hobbs extended two remarkably large, red and calloused palms for Mary's admiration.

The least perceptible flitting of a smile played around the girl's lips, but she was silent, and turned away just in season to avoid David, who at this moment

came through the gate. One glance of David's quick eye took in the different moods of the mother and child, but nothing daunted, he attacked the matron upon a point where most housewives are vulnerable, and which he was well aware would soon bring the good dame to surrender at discretion.

"Mrs. Hobbs, I told aunt Julia to-day that she hadn't had any thing fit to eat in the house for a month, and I was just going over to Mrs. Hobbs' to tea, and have some of her doughnuts."

"Wall, I haint got nary doughnut to-night, so now you know!"

"Of course you haven't, but that is no reason we can't fry some," said David, selecting a soft place upon the grass, and relieving himself of three "somersets;" "I came over on purpose in season to beat the eggs."

"The fire is all out, and I aint a-going to make up no more fire to-night for nobody!"

"Of course you aint; but I am, and I am going to make it up for Mrs. Hobbs, and Mrs. Hobbs and I are going to fry some doughnuts, and after we have tea, I have got something to say to Mrs. Hobbs in secret, and to nobody else but Mrs. Hobbs; so here goes!" and David turned six more somersaults, coming down plump upon a box of prickly pears, the sole house plant of the domain.

"Snooky!" cried the irate Madam, boxing his ears

with her broad palm, "you are the crookedest stick, David, that ever an old maid brought up."

"No twitting, Mrs.! it isn't everybody that can bring up children as you can! but if you want me to tell you what I've got to tell you, I advise you to hurry up those doughnuts."

Mrs. Hobbs was evidently relenting.

"You are the peskiest critter to come round a critter, David, I ever did see. Go and make the fire, and then run out to the barn and hunt up some eggs; I s'pose I may as well make 'em fust as last."

Away went David upon his commission.

"I've got it all cut and dried, Mary—only let me get the old lady alone, and Cæsar is done for!"

Mrs. Hobbs was cajoled into good humor. The doughnuts were, as David sentimentally declared, "all his fancy painted them," and when after tea David with great gallantry escorted Mrs. Hobbs into the parlor, the amiable lady sat smoothing her apron, the pink of smiling expectancy.

"Now, Mrs. Hobbs, I've got a plan into my head that I think will make our fortunes, and enable us to bring ourselves before the people—favorably, you understand; I mean in regard to Mr. Hobbs' election. Now I go in head over heels for Hobbs as second representative, and I am going to have him nominated, too. I want to see you the wife of a representative! A woman that can make such doughnuts as you can, shan't

waste her sweetness on the desert air so long as I am by, now I tell you ! ”

David hitched his chair a little closer, and dropped his voice into a confidential undertone.

“ Now you see what we want is to make the people understand that you go in for the platform ! We want to make them understand that you regard all men as free and equal ! ”

Mrs. Hobbs winked approvingly.

“ Now, I thought that we might get up a lecture, giving an outline of Cæsar’s life and sufferings, and have him go round and deliver it. You see, after he had got through his ‘ experience,’ he could manage to throw in some little compliments in regard to Mr. Hobbs’ and your treatment of him, and it would go a tremendous ways in electioneering. In fact there’s no end to what he might do in that line, if it was well managed. I thought I would speak to you about it, and if you approved of the plan, I would get up a lecture and go round with him, and see that he did it up brown. We would have an entrance fee of course, and as there hasn’t been any negro lecturing up this way, it would go off with a rush. Why, it would be a fortune to us all ; the money would make a grand outfit for the wedding, and we will have it all out in print :

“ ‘ Married, at the bride’s father’s, Mr. Hobbs, second representative of Minden, Miss Mary Hobbs and Cæsar, the late very distinguished colored gentleman, ex-

tensively known as an impressive and eloquent lecturer! A liberal slice of the splendid bridal loaf, said to have been made by the bride's foster-mother, accompanied this notice, for which we return our sincere acknowledgments!'"

David recited the above with such effect that Mrs. Hobbs' eyes fairly shone with delight.

"Snooky!" cried Madam, slapping her great hand upon the young man's shoulder approvingly, "you are some pumpkins arter all! I tell you it is jest the ticket! and you are jest the fellow to carry it through! them's my opinion!"

"Well, I thought you would approve of it—in fact it's just the thing! Now I'll get the lecture ready, and drill it into Cæsar, and he shall deliver it right here in Minden first, so you can see the effect. Why, it would do more for Mr. Hobbs than all the stump-speaking we could get up; and it won't cost any thing, you see—instead of paying out money, we shall be taking it in—and if you'll only keep your own counsel you shan't lack pin-money for one year, now that's certain!"

Nothing could exceed the good woman's enthusiasm; she promised all that was desired, and David, after exchanging masonic tokens with Mary, took his leave.

CHAPTER XX.

"If his title is good,
The material within of small consequence is;
Let him only write fine, and if not understood,
Why, that's the concern of the reader—not his."

LITERARY ADVERTISEMENT.

SQUIRE BRYAN was nursing his lame foot in his easy chair, and whiffing upward the smoke of his Havana at the open window, when he espied in the twilight the roguish face of Miss Dickey's nephew.

"Let me in, Squire, I've got a nut to crack!" and placing his hand upon the window-sill the fellow leaped the barrier with a bound.

"You would have made a splendid clown for some country circus, David. How happens it that you never received a call?"

"Well, I have gone into company now with the ghost of Don Quixote, and have entered upon my mission of relieving young ladies who are to be married against their will, and as two heads are better than one, I have come to consult you. Every wise head wants a fool, you know! I want you to write me a lecture!"

Squire Bryan removed his segar, and gazed at David in mute astonishment, perceiving which the young man took up the thread of his adventures, and gave an outline of the "experience" which he wished to have drawn up.

"Spice it up high, Squire! no wish-washy soup for my palate! Make 'em all cry," cried David, rubbing his hands together gleefully; "let them get their money's worth."

"But I don't believe, David, that Cæsar ever had a very rough experience. I never questioned him, but he looked remarkably sleek and well-fed when brought forward by your aunt Julia and Mr. Cary."

"If you'll just strike a light, Squire, I'll give you the items," and David fumbled in his pocket-book for a memorandum; "here they are, pretty much as I have heard Cæsar tell them over at Glynn's tavern. I suppose we must stick to his old version, or the people might remember his former account of himself. Here is his description of the plantation and his master's family: first he was whipped—next he was roasted—then he was starved—next he was whipped again—then he was hung up by his thumbs and whipped—then he was roasted again!"

"For heaven's sake stop," cried the Squire, squirming; "what is the use of telling over such atrocities as these—you do not believe he ever suffered them, do you?"

"He don't pretend he ever did, that I know of; but when he saw how the crowd enjoyed his experiences, it was natural he should make them as wonderful as he could. Beside, we want to get up a sensation."

The Squire mused a moment.

"Well, David, I do not think I had better write that lecture; you can do it better than I could, and it might be brought up against me politically; but if there is any thing else I can do for you, I will aid you with pleasure."

David twirled his hat with some embarrassment.

"I wish by and by, Squire, when the lecture is about being announced, that you would contrive to get Mary Hobbs over here, and take care of her. Unless I am greatly mistaken she leads a sorry life over there, and if some things take place about that time that I think may happen, it would be safe to have Mary out of harm's way."

Squire Bryan looked keenly into David's face, but expressed no curiosity in regard to what might happen.

"Mary shall be here safe and sound, David."

"Do you hear from Stanton, Squire?" asked David, after a long pause.

"Oh, yes; Frank is laying siege to beauty and an heiress."

The sudden flush of gratified surprise that overspread David's features did not escape the lawyer's eye, and he went on expatiating upon Frank's prospects!

"I don't know why," said David, in a tone he intended to be pre-eminently indifferent, "but I fancied there was some kind of an understanding between him and Mary!"

A new light flashed upon Squire Bryan's mind, and wheeling suddenly about he brought such a piercing gaze to bear upon the young man's face that David sat covered with blushes and confusion.

As Squire Bryan gazed, a series of trifles seemed suddenly to have become illuminated; David's evident interest in the pretty Mary—the delicate but commonplace attentions of Frank Stanton—his evident regret at leaving Minden, and the unfeigned disgust with which he received the mercenary summons to return home for the purpose of wooing and winning a wealthy bride—and the peculiarly plaintive tenderness with which in all his letters he had adverted to his Minden life as among the happiest hours he ever had known in the past, or could hope for in the future! All this and much more went through the mind of the Squire, and he felt a momentary pang that his young friend had faithfully concealed at least one secret from his indulgent mentor!

"If," said the Squire, when his searching gaze was withdrawn, "Frank ever felt any unusual interest in Miss Mary, he must have been aware that his passion was hopeless, since nothing could induce his father to consent to that union. I know him of old, the very soul of family pride."

David breathed more freely, and when he shook hands with the Squire, he knew that his heart was laid bare before him, but he knew he would respect his secret. The Squire seemed to understand the confidence so silently expressed, and to respond to it with a more cordial clasp.

"I have thought, David, you might be doing something better for yourself than turning somersaults, and tending your aunt Julia's menagerie. It is time that you look the future steadily in the face, young man, and prepare to act well your part in the great drama of life."

"I have been thinking of that myself," David said seriously; "but I must take Cæsar to his lectures now, and then farewell to folly!" and with a low bow David withdrew.

Squire Bryan smoked and cogitated, until, pressing the stump of his segar upon the window-sill, he hobbled away in search of his wife Nannie, whom he found in her little sewing room, in the deepening shade of the evening, gazing up toward the one bright star which seemed always associated with the memory of her lost children.

He placed his hand tenderly upon her head, and sat down by her side, gazing out into the gathering darkness, and both were silent.

By and by the moon came up, tipping with silver the fleecy clouds behind which she coquettishly veiled

her beauty ; and baptizing the whole landscape with loveliness.

The husband gazed into the face of his wife ; a tear rested upon her cheek, but he knew it was the heavenly dew of a loving and sanctified heart.

“Nannie, my love,” said the husband, taking her hand between both of his, “you are too much alone ; I think so often, but business absorbs me, and I neglect you. I have a little plan now, however, that I think will meet with your approval. Suppose we adopt Mary Hobbs ?”

Nannie’s face flushed half with pleasure and half with surprise.

“But she is adopted, Horace. We could not think of taking her from her friends at this late period, when she is becoming a young lady, and will soon be settled in a home of her own.”

“Did it ever occur to you, Nannie, that an affection was springing up between Mary and Frank ?”

Nannie was silent a little.

“I used to think of such a thing, Horace, when Frank was so fond of talking about her, but I do not think it ever would have amounted to any thing.”

“Oh, no—how could it ? His father would have cut him off without a shilling ; and Mary is so young, she will forget him soon enough. It never seemed to me as if the child was very kindly treated there, and I know she was always a great favorite with you. Now, if

upon reflection you think you would like to have Mary in the family, I feel pretty confident I can bring it round. But you must understand that I have no particular desire for it myself, only that I think it would be agreeable having her here, and you would be less alone when I am away."

Nannie pressed his hand gratefully.

"I am quite certain that I should love dearly to have Mary with me. She is unlike all young girls I ever met—so delicate, kind, generous, and intelligent; she always seemed misplaced."

"No doubt she is, and if, as it is said, Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs have endeavored to force this revolting marriage upon her, they have certainly sacrificed all claim to her upon the score of former kindnesses."

"I never believed the report," said Nannie; "it is true she went to church with Cæsar, and was said to have allowed many freedoms from him, but all that might be for the purpose of keeping peace in the family. Mrs. Hobbs is so vulgar herself she would never perceive the indelicacy of such intercourse. I dare say the marriage would seem proper enough to her, and it would be proper enough if Mrs. Hobbs was the bride!"

As for David, he was already bending over the first literary production he had ever seriously attempted, and he was surprised to find how little difference there was between thinking and writing out his story. He remembered once, when he had been walking with

Frank Stanton, and had drawn some comparison between Frank and himself, indicative of his consciousness that Frank was his superior, the young man had touched his arm and said energetically, "There now, David, never say that again; you have more wit and shrewd good sense than any body I ever saw!"

Indeed, Frank more than once had spoken words of commendation that had settled down into David's heart, germinating for future harvest. Like Mary, David had beheld in him an ideal who unconsciously had exercised a mystic fascination over his uncultivated nature, and by his delicate, intuitive graces, awakened David to a sense of his own uncouthness through the strange contrast of their different personalities.

Day and night David labored at his "experience," until a long, loud, triumphal shout, accompanied by a summersault, announced that the "finis" had been written. Cæsar was summoned, and his oratorical education commenced.

The description of the plantation was recited.

"Dat fus'rate!" cried Cæsar, rolling his eyes approvingly.

A description of his master followed.

"Dat fus'rate too!"

The first whipping was given.

"Dat more fus'rate dan toddler!" cried Cæsar, grinning with delight, as he fancied the sensation that would follow the recital!

The "roast" was given in detail.

"Oh, Lor' Gor 'Mighty ! dem's punkins for sartin !" yelled Cæsar, cutting a pigeon's wing ; " dem's roast as is roast ! "

The "starving scene" was in David's best style, and being a subject in regard to which Cæsar was very sensitive, it very naturally drew tears to his eyes ; satisfied with the effect, David proceeded to the second whipping.

Cæsar's countenance brightened again.

"Dem's um ! hit um agin ! Gosh ! guess de yaller gals pass round der hankerchiefs dis time, enny how ! "

When David recited the "tying up by the thumbs," with the suitable flagellations, Cæsar was beside himself with delight.

"Oh Lor', Massa David ! when dis chile take an attumtude, and 'scribes dat ar lickin', if de graby don' run den, Mass' Dave, guess 'twill be coz dey is short of de raw material ! yah ! yah ! yah ! yah ! yah ! "

And so David went on reciting and Cæsar approving, until it came to what David called the "final blowing of trumpets ! "

"Now Cæsar, I've got to the last great flourish, and you must do this up brown ! Every lecturer winds up with a real ring-peal-snorter ! a sentence that sounds well, and puts the nub on ! Now you have told over all of your past life, and it can't be your fault if they

haven't had variety enough ; the audience will be bathed in tears of course ; so you must give them time to blow their noses and wipe up before they disperse. So to take the chill off, you must touch upon your reception at the North ! You needn't mind Mr. Cary, nor Aunt Julia, but when you come to Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs, then go it ! You must turn round to where they are sitting, and extend your hand toward them in this way, as you say,

“ ‘ But how shall I express the gratitude that swells in my bosom at the recollection of these, my best, my dearest, my honored friends who have received me into the bosom of their family, given me a seat at their bountiful board—who have honored me with their friendship, and intrusted the happiness of their daughter to my keeping ! ’ ”

“ ‘ Here, Cæsar, I think you had better pull out your handkerchief and weep. It will be white, you know, and it will be very affecting. When you think you have cried enough, you can sniff once or twice pretty hard, to let them know you have got through, and go on in this way :

“ ‘ Pardon my emotion, ladies and gentlemen ; such kindness as theirs would melt the heart of a stone ! And I mention it that you may see that if you think proper to elect him as second representative, you will be certain to elect a man who is true to his political platform, and who does not preach one thing and prac-

tise another! May he flourish like a green bay tree, and may his shadow never be less——’ ”

“Dem’s what dis ’ere chile calls eloquence!” cried Cæsar, applying both hands to the lower regions of his stomach with an air of great sentiment!

“Yes—siree, sir!” said David. “If they can stand that, they had better be given over to hardness of heart!”

Although Cæsar so fully appreciated the intellectual beauties of his prospective lecture, he was by no means so enthusiastic in transferring the items to his own stupid brain. David’s patience was sorely tried when he found Cæsar falling asleep day after day over his own sufferings, and growing suddenly oblivious where his tortures should have been keenest. Indeed, when left to his own recital, he mixed the whippings, and roastings, and starvations, up into such an unintelligible jargon, that David well-nigh threw his literary bantling to the flames in disgust! But David bethought him of Cæsar’s favorite drink, which placing upon the table beside him, so stimulated our hero’s exertions that after two weeks’ drilling Cæsar’s lecture was announced as ready for delivery.

All Minden was by this time in a high state of expectancy. The public prejudice which had so severely passed judgment upon the love-passage in poor Mary’s life had slowly been turning in her favor. It came to be rumored that Mary had received Cæsar’s attentions

from no other reason than through fear of her foster-parents, and that they were forcing this marriage upon her for the furtherance of political aspirations. The widowers and admiring young men were zealous in her defence, while that particular class designated by Saxe as the "very married men," muttered out their indignation more loudly in proportion as the square of distance increased between themselves and their better-halves, and insinuated that tar and feathers was too good for so dastardly a schemer as Hobbs.

There were loud threats of mobbing the lecturer, and of tearing down the church if it was opened for the occasion of the lecture! Mr. Cary was hung in effigy upon his own lightning-rod, while the fair Miss Dickey was seated in her Reception robes by proxy upon the top of the liberty-pole! Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs were burnt at the stake in the full blaze of a bonfire of pine shavings, and Cæsar himself was represented by a lay figure setting out in a literary career upon a spiked rail!

Even the children formed themselves into parties, and pitched into each other in defence of the paternal platform, until bloody noses and blackened eyes were abundant, and every mamma could boast of her "youth with the open countenance!"

Suddenly the excitement subsided. The church door was thrown wide open, and jammed to its utmost capacity upon the occasion of the lecture. Mr.

Cary was there, though his zeal had evidently abated since his domestic experience with the lecturer; but then it was necessary to live up to his own teachings;



and he was expected to open the exercises with prayer. The fair Julia was there, fixing her Medusa-like gaze upon Cæsar's sable face with an acidity of expression most edifying to behold.

Mr. Johnson and his inestimable lady were present also. Mr. Johnson was upon the platform, Mrs.

Johnson very conspicuously seated in front.

Squire Bryan and Nannie, with Mary Hobbs, who had been engaged to assist Nannie in her sewing that week, formed a little group at the right.

Mrs. Kimball was near them. Mr. and Mrs. Smith also, who all seemed intent upon enjoying the occasion.

Indeed, everybody was there who could get there, and David, who took the silver bits at the door, well-

nigh turned a "somerset" upon the hall floor, so excited was he with the pecuniary success !

Cæsar, whose personal estimation of himself was by no means diminished by his present position, ascended the rostrum with an air that would have eclipsed the most aspiring of our youthful politicians ! As Minden had not been initiated into the mysteries of "claquers," the sable orator was received "as might have been expected." There was a wonderful shuffling of calf-skin boots, flabby slappings of bare hands, with groans and hisses in the background. Preliminaries over, Cæsar, who had been drilled and stimulated into a tolerable retentiveness of his sufferings, rehearsed his history with a hesitation and naïveté which, judging from the tears that were shed, melted the hearts of the audience ; but the final flourish of rhetoric, where, turning to Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs, he poured forth his feelings, produced an effect entirely the reverse of that which the amiable couple had anticipated.

Cries of "Shame ! Shame !" burst from all sides of the house, mingled with most emphatic denunciations at the allusion to the intended union. Squire Bryan retired with Mary upon his arm, and the moment the door closed behind them, such a yell of execration went up as never was heard in Minden.

Cæsar, not exactly comprehending the tumult, and already intoxicated with the evening's success, being spurred on by the villainous David, who was prompting

him from behind, and urging him on to his destruction, thought proper to improvise a few expressions upon his own responsibility! Mr. Hobbs' political rivals now scented the game, and the confusion increased, until the ladies retired with precipitancy, and the meeting was quite broken up. Cæsar was spirited away by the indefatigable David to Glynn's Hotel, where he was made to forget his disastrous debut by generous whiskey-skins and potations of eau-de-vie-de-sucre! Placing him under lock and key, ostensibly to secure his safety, David left him to the enjoyment of his potations, and a lecturer's *éclât*!

CHAPTER XXI.

"No more could boast on Plato's plan,
To rank among the race of man,
Or prove his claim to human nature
As a two-legged, unfeathered creature."—McFINGAL.

THE good people of Minden were already yielding themselves to the sweeter influences of night, and Mrs. Hobbs was herself tying the strings of her cotton cap, when a knock at the outer door of her home attracted attention.

"Who's there?" asked the dame, raising the window, and projecting her unattractive physiognomy for the intruder's admiration.

"I wish to speak with Mr. Hobbs a minute; is he in?"

"Wall, he won't be out, I reckon, this time o' night! Here—H-o-b-b-s—you! don't you hear? you're wanted."

Mr. Hobbs, in a state of extreme dishabille, became visible by the side of his partner.

"What's wanted?"

"I wish to speak with you upon very urgent business. I am sorry to disturb you at this late hour, but it concerns your interests more than mine."

The window closed, and after a little delay, Mr. Hobbs appeared at the door.

"Have the kindness to step this way, as it is necessary to maintain the greatest secrecy."

The unsophisticated aspirant for the second representativeness rounded the corner of the farm-house, and found himself surrounded by a group of disguised men, the leader of whom promptly advanced, and laying his hand upon our friend's shoulder, exclaimed,

"Mr. Hobbs, you are our prisoner. The first sound that passes your lips will be the signal for violence; follow us quietly, and you are safe."

Quaking with terror, Mr. Hobbs resigned himself to his captors, and the dark mass closing in upon him, he was escorted with military tread and the ominous beat of a muffled drum to a retired nook by the river side, where the party falling upon the right and left, allowed the prisoner the range of the column.

"Now, sir," demanded the leader, "you will please to answer the questions put to you in a distinct voice."

"Do you design to marry your adopted daughter, Mary Hobbs, to this negro, known by the name of Cæsar?"

"I have nothing to do about it," sniffled the prisoner, "Mary is going to marry him herself."

"Do you approve of this marriage, and have you encouraged his attentions?"

"Wall, I can't say but what I have," whined Hobbs.

"Sir, you can but be aware that this union is abhorrent to every feeling of humanity! Had this young girl been your own daughter, you would have sacrificed your life before you would have seen her the wife of such a man! It is known to us that you designed to enforce this marriage because you fancied it would promote your political advancement! You would sacrifice this helpless girl for your ambition, and because she had no natural protectors, you fancied your fellow-citizens would stand coldly by while your design was consummated. Behold your mistake, sir! You have been tried by a self-elected jury, both within and without your political party, and they have decided to cool your abolition fury in a manner that will not fail to do it effectually. The remedy will now be put to the test! Gentlemen, do your duty!"

Grim, and dark, and stern, the two men nearest the prisoner silently advanced, at whose approach Mr. Hobbs fell upon his knees, and roared lustily for protection. "He had a right to do what he chose with a child who had been a great trouble and expense to him!"

Cries of "No! no!"

"He was a defenceless, unarmed man, torn from

Mrs. Hobbs' arms at the dead of night, and it was a dastardly act to entice him there by false representations, to misuse him ! ”

The ominous sternness with which silence was commanded convinced the prisoner he had nothing to hope from their clemency or his own rhetoric. Very deliberately his not numerous garments were removed, until the poor victim stood shivering in the night air, naked.

“ Gentlemen, you will please to abate this man's political aspirations by a series of cold-water baths. Advance ! One—two—are you ready ? Three ! ”

“ For heaven's sake,” screamed Hobbs, cutting a series of pigeon's wings with an abandon that would have shamed the divine Ellsler, “ don't put me into the water this time of night. I have had the rheumatiz awful, and it will be the death of me, sartin. Dear gentlemen, for God's sake, don't ! ”

Mr. Hobbs was lifted from his kneeling posture, and like Mahomet's coffin swayed between the heavens and earth, struggling and foaming like a hydrophobiatic in his final agonies. It was but an instant, however—down went the practical amalgamist, and the water closed over him !

“ Will you denounce this marriage publicly, and allow your daughter to go free ? ” asked the judge, as Hobbs appeared once more upon the surface, and despite his desperate exertions, remained suspended above the stream.

"No!" muttered the man, with his mouth full of water, now thoroughly aroused, "I have as much right to my opinions as you have to yours!"

Souse! and the water slowly gurgled over him!

"Will you now renounce?"

"Dip me like a tallow candle, and be damned to you!" sputtered the recipient; "I——"

Souse! and this time there was a slight pause before the second representative reascended.

"Mr. Hobbs, you are now asked for the third and last time; will you renounce?"

There was no answer.

"Speak!"

No answer.

"Gentlemen, do your duty—three times three!"

As Hobbs felt the grasp upon him renewed with an earnestness that bespoke no leniency in the executioner, and felt himself taking his aerial equipoise, as destitute of any terrestrial support as Pegasus himself, it is not to be wondered at that ambition oozed as rapidly from his soul as the water had done from his nose and ears.

"For God's sake, gentlemen, let me go; I will promise any thing."

"Let the gentleman be heard," was the order, and Mr. Hobbs was placed upon his feet. Somebody has said that "Man was only brave in his boots;" certain it is that Hobbs was fast losing his courage out of them! His teeth chattered like a dice-box.

"Dear gentlemen, only let me put on my clothes! What will Miss Hobbs say!"

The judge was moved to pity, and Hobbs slipped into his attire vastly more rapidly than he had come out of it!

"Cold water baths agree with you wonderfully, sir," cried the judge, cruelly! "You are more active by far than when you disrobed. Gentlemen, apply the matches!"

As if by magic a bright flame flashed out, revealing to the shivering Hobbs the preparations for a fate more to be dreaded than bathing by starlight.

"The prisoner will please take his position by the fire, and answer the following questions:

"Do you now renounce your amalgamation theories for all coming time?"

"I do," muttered the victim, sullenly.

"Speak up, sir, your intonation is suspicious!"

"I do!" and this time Hobbs jerked it out with a will.

"Gentlemen, stir the tar! Mr. Hobbs, we prefer more euphony of speech. As an office-seeker you are deficient in elocution. Will you now renounce?"

"I do!" whimpered Hobbs, blandly.

"Will you also renounce all claims upon Mary as your adopted daughter, leaving her at liberty to act and provide for herself without molestation from yourself or family from this time henceforth and forever?"

"I will."

"Mr. Hobbs, you have decided wisely, and we solemnly adjure you to adhere to these resolutions, since for any departure from them you will be called to the strictest account by these, your fellow-citizens and jury, whose vigilance will follow you from this hour forward! It now becomes our painful duty to announce to you, that because you have forgotten to protect the fatherless, and have oppressed the orphan, and outraged every law of manhood and decency in your conduct, the severest penalty of the Lynch law will be inflicted upon you, both as a punishment for the past and a healthy admonition for the future; that should you again be tempted to oppress the weak, the remembrances of this hour may the better enable you to resist. One—two—gentlemen, are you ready?"

"Oh dear—dear—dear!" blubbered Hobbs, now humbled in good earnest; "you've killed me eny jest as it is! I wish Miss Hobbs was here. Jest go on and kill me outright, and then you'll be hanged, and that will be some consolation, eny how! Only I should like to take leave of Miss Hobbs!"

"Gentlemen, we will sing (*sub voce*) the hymn commencing with the line,

"'Hark from the tombs a doleful sound!'

Mr. Hobbs, you will please give us the pitch."

"A pretty time to ask a fellow to sing," cried

Hobbs, his voice indignantly acknowledging the insult.

“Gentlemen, is the tar of proper heat and consistency? Untie the feathers. Mr. Hobbs, we are waiting for the pitch—now, sir!”

There was evidently no alternative, and poor Hobbs struck up in a shaky minor, the dolorous notes in which all joined with sepulchral voices, rendered tenfold hideous by the lurid flames, and the mysterious black masks of his tormentors. Mr. Hobbs’ voice failed in the third line.

“Gentlemen, do your duty. One! two! are you ready?”

Down went the poor victim, not only upon his knees, but his hands, while every portion of his body that could be twisted into supplication was pressed into duty.

“Oh gentlemen! dear, dear gentlemen! only jest think of your own wives at home, and how they would feel and take on if you were served in this ’ere way! It will break Miss Hobbs’ heart sartin as the world! Boo—oo!”

A gag adroitly stifled the affectionate husband’s grief. Once more his coat was removed and his limbs bared.

“Now, gentlemen, arrange this man’s toilet to the very best of your abilities; see that you have an eye to

Miss Hobbs' gratification ! Suggestions from the crowd gratefully received ! ”

“ Give him a moustache,” cries one.

“ Touch up his whiskers,” suggests another.

“ Don't forget an imperial ! ”

“ His eyebrows are too thin ! ” cries another.

“ Ah ! ‘ What a beauty I did grow ! ’ ” murmured a voice.

“ The gentleman is shivering ; put on his mittens ! ”

“ That's a capital fit ! ”

“ Equal to those Miss Hobbs knits ? hey ? ”

“ Put on his coat.”

“ Make it thick and warm, so he won't have the rheumatiz ! ”

“ Does it feel easy around the arms ? ”

“ How do you like your tailor ? ”

“ Any alterations to suggest ? ”

“ We solicit a continuance of your patronage ! ”

“ Will you have it a frock, a jacket, or a swallow-tail ? ”

“ Or a ‘ long-tailed blue ? ’ ”

“ Now let us have on his stockings and shoes ! ”

“ What would the gentleman be measured for ? ”

“ Make them long-heeled ! ”

“ Give him some long stockings with silver buckles ! ”

“ Put him on some pumps, and let him dance us a reel.”

"There's a pair warranted not to stick. Now let us see you 'trip the light fantastic toe.'"

"Don't be bashful—show your agility!"

"Mr. Hobbs," ruled the judge, "you will please favor us with a hornpipe!"

"I can't dance! upon my honor I can't," cried Hobbs, plaintively; "I really wish I could!"

"Will you excuse him, gentlemen?"

"We really beg his pardon, but if he would only try, we are sure he would do it to our entire satisfaction."

"Mr. Hobbs, you will dance!"

But Mr. Hobbs "would not dance—cuss 'em!"

"Gentlemen, apply the cat-o'-nine-tails!"

"Now, then!" cried Hobbs, despairingly; and if all the extravaganzas in the dance of Macbeth's witches were combined in one, that one could not hope to dim the lustre of Hobbs' impromptu performance. It was received with loud acclaims, which having subsided, the judge thus addressed him:

"Mr. Hobbs, we have now performed our duty, as you must be conscious, at great sacrifices to our personal comfort. We do not expect any remuneration for our services, but we should be happy to know that you appreciate our efforts. You will therefore return thanks to these gentlemen who have labored so zealously in your behalf. The night is advancing, and as Mrs. Hobbs must naturally feel solicitous for your re-

turn, you will do well to express yourself as expeditiously and briefly as possible."

Mr. Hobbs hesitated, but upon some one accidentally bringing the cat-o'-nine-tails to view, his reluctance vanished.

"I thank you, gentlemen, and hope in time to have the pleasure of returning the favor, which you may be sure I shall do with hearty good-will."

"That is very well said, Mr. Hobbs, and in return let me assure you, in the behalf of these gentlemen, that you are most cordially welcome, and that we shall be extremely happy to renew your obligations upon a repetition of this or any similar outrage upon the laws of good citizenship."

The sentence was yet unfinished, when loud, prolonged, and almost unearthly shrieks announced the approach of the lone, lorn woman, who having awaited the return of her liege lord in vain, had sallied out, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, in pursuit of him.

"Hobbs! H-o-bbs! Meester Hobbs!" And so, panting and screeching, the good matron arrived at the scene of action, guided by the dying embers of the recent flames, and the glad response of her now feathered mate!

Mrs. Hobbs gazed upon him by the uncertain light of stars and embers, until the truth dawned upon her

understanding, and then with one loud snort raised her conjugal lament!

"Snooky! Sno-o-ky! What under heavens and arth——"

"Hold your confounded tongue, and help me out of this muss, won't you?" cried the second representative! "This comes of your wanting to be a representative's wife! What did you get me out here this time of night, to be tarred and feathered for? Answer me that, Madam!"

And Hobbs, glad to have things all in his own way, shook his fist defiantly at his better-half.

"I got you out! Snooky! That's the way with you men the world over! no matter what turns up, it is all laid upon the shoulders of us! I allers told you jest what it would come to! I allers told you you would get tarred and feathered, and now you've got fixed so I guess you'll stick to the platform without eny urging! Jest as if I wanted to be a representative's wife! Didn't I know 'twant any use 'wanting' when I had got sich a fool for my husband? Snooky!"

Here Mrs. Hobbs' indignation got the better of her eloquence, and she was silent for no other reason than because she couldn't speak!

The satisfaction of mutual recrimination having subsided, the couple very naturally resolved themselves into a committee of investigation, to decide upon the ways and means of extricating the newly-fledged aspir-

ant from his rather unbecoming ornamentals. As at the very first sound of Mrs. Hobbs' voice, every man had vanished as silently as if the earth had received him, the wife alone made very little progress in removing the evil. Every fresh attempt was met with renewed anathemas, until, not knowing exactly what was best to be done, they concluded, as many an innocent has done before them, they would flee for shelter to the Law! Behold, then, this amiable couple in pursuit of justice! Mrs. Hobbs, with her good man's cast-off apparel upon her arms, strode before; while her white cloth cap, which had been overlooked in her conjugal anxiety, constituted a kind of guide to her more tardy follower; just as the glow-worm practically lights a lover, the only difference being in the antipodes of the attraction! The shadows of the wee sma' hours enveloped the cottage of Squire Bryan, and profound silence reigned within and without. But nothing daunted, the worthy couple vowed they would not sleep upon their wrongs. Mrs. Hobbs labored violently at the doorbell, while her husband applied his knuckles to the panels!

The echoes alone answered to their unceremonious callings. The wire had broken in the effort, and the feathers upon the good man's knuckles had been transferred to the outer door. There was a slow shuffle within, and the premonitory query of "Who's there?" most ungraciously growled forth.

"Me!" cried Hobbs.

"Us!" cried the wife.

"Who?"

"Friends," cried both voices at once.

The door opened cautiously, but instantly was closed, as if from alarm.

"Let us in," cried Hobbs, choking with anger, "I want justice!"

"We want justice!" echoed the wife.

"But who the deuce are you?"

"If you never let us in, you never will find out! them's my opinion!" cried the testy Madam, renewing her tattoo upon the door panels, this time rendered emphatic by sundry kicks with her uncelestial feet!

"Surely I ought to recognise those dulcet tones," cried the now gallant lawyer, opening the door to its fullest extent; "is it possible I can be honored with a visit from Mrs. Hobbs at this unusual hour? Walk in, neighbors, walk in!"

"Squire Bryan," cried Mr. Hobbs, whose feet adhered tenaciously to the threshold, "look at me! Won't you just have the kindness to look at me?"

"Certainly, sir, with the greatest pleasure," returned the limb-of-the-law, advancing so as to throw the light of his night-lamp upon his visitor's plumage.

As the Squire gazed upon him with a comical expression, passing his night-lamp slowly up and down, and down and up, as if to make sure of his man, the

poor victim of Lynch law stood gnashing his teeth with impatience, brimful of ire !



“Well,” he at last blurted out, “what do you think?”

“I should say, Mr. Hobbs, that you had been in bad company!”

“Say be damned!” cried the man, wrathfully; “I tell you I want justice!”

“I should say, Mr. Hobbs, that you had got it!”

"We want them villains arrested to-night, before they make their escape!" shouted Madam. "'What's sass for goose is sass for gander,' and we'll teach 'em to seduce us at this time of night away from our housen, to be treated in this 'ere way!"

"Madam, I shall be happy to serve you; what would you like me to do?"

"That is jest what we came to find out; if we had know'd what to do, we should have did it, I reckon, without trying to raise dead folks!"

"I want you to arrest the perpetrators of this foul deed," cried Hobbs, solemnly.

"Fowl enough! but who are they?"

"How do you suppose I know?" cried Hobbs, stamping with impatience, "every man of them had on black masks."

"Did you recognize their voices?"

"No; their mouths were filled with sunthin' or other! I couldn't guess at one of them."

"Then I do not understand how you can arrest any one. Your best way is to go home and arrange your toilet as speedily as possible; give out that you are sick for a few days, keep your own counsel, and let the thing drop. You see, Mr. Hobbs, if the story gets over the neighborhood that you have been tarred and feathered, there will be no end to the jokes that will be cracked at your expense."

The amiable couple hesitated. It was evident they were sighing for the poultice of the law.

"Probably," Squire Bryan continued, "the offending party have arranged to avoid detection, and you would only have the sorry consolation of making the affair public, and paying your own costs. As it is, you had better pay me a five dollar bill, and get home as fast as you can!"

Here was a clincher! It had never occurred to our friends that justice must be paid for!

"It's pretty hard for a man to be obleeged to pay five dollars for being tarred and feathered," whined Hobbs.

"Them's my opinion!" snorted Madam.

"I live by my profession, Mr. Hobbs; that would be but a small part of what I should charge you, if I acceded to your unreasonable wishes. However, if you insist, I will proceed to obtain justice for you to the best of my ability. But you cannot expect me, who, as you know was abed and asleep, to know more of the rascals than you, who had such occasion to remember them."

Mr. Hobbs looked thoughtfully at his wife, and Mrs. Hobbs looked indignantly at her husband.

"Miss Hobbs, what is best to be did?"

Mrs. Hobbs slowly extracted the old leather wallet from her husband's pocket, and placed it in his hand, her eyes flashing fire.

"Pay him the five dollars, Hobbs. I could have bought a whole feather bed for what this little mess has cost you! Snooky!"

Hobbs groaned, but extracted the bill, which then and there changed owners.

"I guess we'll go home!" shouted Madam, facing about, and readjusting her husband's broadcloth upon her arms.

Mr. Hobbs raised one foot slowly, then the other, and muttering low thunder, followed after.

Squire Bryan held the little night-lamp far out into the darkness.

"Mrs. Hobbs, just take my advice; put a comb on to your husband's head, and sell him for a new kind of Shanghai! If I can be of any further service to you, do not fail to call upon me. I beg you will excuse my not hearing you sooner

"As so gently you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door!"

A pair of eyes of phosphoric lustre gleamed back out of the darkness, and a mass of muscle and knuckles shook, invoking vengeance! when again the cotton cap was lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness, and our amiable couple set out upon their return from the pursuit of justice.

CHAPTER XXII.

The little foxes that spoil the vines.—SONG OF SOLOMON.

NOTWITHSTANDING that Mr. Hobbs was reported to be confined to his house with rheumatism, and that Squire Bryan's five dollars' worth of advice was acted upon to the letter, the whole neighborhood was posted in the minutiae of the lynching before the second day's sunrise! What consternation ensued! Minden was like the hero of the olden tale, who laughed with one side of his face while he wept with the other! The one party held its sides with laughter, while the other seized upon the occasion to elevate the sufferer upon the shoulders of its enthusiasm, and ring his praises as a martyr to liberty! There was no end to the "sympathy" manifested for the no longer insignificant Hobbs; but a cloud was stealing up from a direction little regarded, of which it becomes the historian's duty to make mention.

In all communities, and we might say churches, there is to be found one or more unfortunate individuals

whose sole delight seems to consist in pecking at the weaknesses of their neighbors; digging up, searching out, and dragging before the world such little sins as seem to be the fruits of our "natural depravity," rather than to originate in any intention of evil.

Deacon Curious was the bane of Minden. With what seemed to be the very best of intentions, he went about from morning until night sowing the seed of discord throughout the neighborhood. He "felt it to be his duty" to listen to all the village gossip, and retail it, because he seemed to hope to find some relief in getting other people's opinion about it! He was exceedingly given to groaning when his friends' foibles were spoken of, and exclaiming in a very sepulchral tone, "The Lord have mercy upon all sinners!"

The poor old deacon was a little deaf withal, and if there was any one word the misconstruction of which would entirely change the meaning of the sentence, the deacon's ears were sure to trip in hearing, and he would directly start upon his errand of mercy, and give no rest to the sole of his foot until every family had been edified with his groanings.

Beside these qualifications for a nuisance, he had the happy knack of being exactly upon the spot where he wasn't wanted! If a brother or sister in the church yielded to but one weakness in their life, Deacon Curious was just as certain to be upon the spot in season to get the worst view of it, as the sun was to set upon their

repentance. It was this rare talent that sent the deacon abroad upon the very unseasonable hour of the lynching, and brought him to be an ear-witness to the soul-harrowing fact that "Brother Hobbs was guilty of using profane language" upon that painful occasion. He had been returning from a charitable visit to a sick relative, and happened to come upon the party in the very act of immersing the victim. He had distinctly heard Brother Hobbs say, "cuss 'em," and the old man's lips quivered with holy horror when he affirmed that he had also said "damn!"

It was in vain Mr. Cary urged the extremity of the occasion, and suggested that doubtless under the excitement of the indignity, Brother Hobbs had been tempted to express himself in unusual terms, which he himself would condemn upon reflection. The good deacon could not be pacified; "his soul was harrowed up for his brother," and nothing but a church meeting could give him relief. And so the brethren were requested to assemble, and Deacon Curious was duly confronted with Brother Hobbs. The deacon groaned, and his brother confessed; but this trivial thing fired the train that ultimately rent the Minden church asunder!

Deacon Curious was politically neutral, no party being "good enough to receive his vote." But unfortunately the church was political as well as religious, and amid this inflammable refuse of sin was concealed

the slow trail that communicated the spark to the magazine.

The brethren not in political fellowship with Brother Hobbs insisted that bathing by starlight was by no means a sufficient excuse for profanity, and that if he had not been in the habit of indulging in that sin secretly, he could not possibly twice have been thrown off his guard. Beside, he had "set an awful example before the sinners who were present, and thereby brought a reproach upon the cause he professed;" and "therefore they moved that Brother Hobbs be suspended from communionship."

Mr. Cary and his friends immediately uttered their protest, and a war of words was at once commenced, as memorable in Minden as the war of roses. Every thing that rancor, malice, and bitterness could suggest, was hurled from one brother to the other, until it was very evident if "Bedlam had not broken loose," something equally disastrous to good fellowship was abroad in the church.

It was no longer the question of profanity that agitated the fold; it was which political party should carry its point! One member after another seceded, and in order to testify to their steadfastness, services were opened in a school-house, and after a few weeks the new church invited a young pastor from abroad to rule over them. Unfortunately for Mr. Cary, the dissatisfied parties had been his monied parishioners, and he found

that although he had succeeded in "arousing his people," he had also succeeded in demolishing his church, and reducing his salary to a pecuniary zero, that yielded no adequate return for his time and labors. His little flock grew cold and listless ; indeed, so intent were both societies upon annoying each other, that they had no surplus zeal to expend upon religion. The ladies dressed to rival each other ; the gentlemen commenced erecting a new church destined to eclipse the old. Church second gave brilliant parties for the express purpose of not inviting the first ! Church second even raised a subscription for an organ, and insinuated that church first might continue to "fiddle and sing !"

Church first invited a brilliant clergyman from abroad to come to Minden, and preach an annihilating sermon at church second, which they voted to have printed and distributed among the former members of the church.

Church first also appointed a day of fasting and prayer, that church second might repent of its manifold sins !

They had rival sewing societies—rival Washingtonian societies—rival prayer-meetings—rival Sabbath schools—rival hymn-books—and so far as the beauty of the binding was concerned, rival Bibles !

Here was a rich and full harvest for Deacon Curious, who went from one society to the other, always like a bird of prey, with carrion in his mouth. He be-

wailed the sins of No. 1, and he wept tears of blood over the vanities of No. 2. "He lifted up his voice like a pelican in the wilderness, and like the sparrow upon the house-top, he uttered his moan!"

We drop the curtain over the shameless and unpardonable recklessness of political religion. Would to heaven that Minden alone bore witness to the fatal folly of its clergy! that no other churches had been as ruthlessly sacrificed to that conservatism, that sees no evil to combat at its own threshold, and no souls worth saving but those beyond the precincts to which they have been called to minister.

All over the country the deserted churches are eloquent with reproach, while from afar comes up the wail of despair from the scattered flocks, who have fallen into the pits their own pastors have dug for their souls. To what, we ask, is this unwonted disregard for the Sabbath, and this startling predisposition to infidelity attributable, which for the last few years has palsied religious influence, and clogged the wheels of Christianity? Why are backsliders from the true faith so numerous, and why is the Church hooted at by her former friends? We boldly answer, it is because the clergy have grown wanton in their abuse of the respect accorded to them as the vicegerents of God! They insult the audiences that go up to the high places for religious instructions, by forcing upon them political rantings which they would not presume to utter in the streets!

Most recklessly have they cast the "apple of discord" among their people. Wickedly have they imputed their own self-will and tenacity of purpose to the impulses of God! We repudiate such blasphemy! A political priest is a social and moral evil, and the church can no more thrive under his influence than flowers beneath the shade of the deadly upas.

And what is to be the result of this strange fanaticism? for, indeed, by what milder appellative can it be known?

Cannot the clergy be made sensible that they are placing the axe at the root of their own tree? that they are sapping forever that beautiful trust and confidence and love which the New England people have pre-eminently accorded to its clergy? In whom can we believe, if the pastor that we have elected with thanksgiving, and sustained with our prayers, tramples upon our religious interests to gratify his personal proclivities? We have trusted; alas, let us not be betrayed!

Break to us still the Bread of Life, for which we are an hungered; avail yourselves of the sanctity with which we invest you, and which is the key to the influence you exert over the people, to hush the tempests of our passions, and so far as in you lies,

"Between us two let there be peace!"

The human heart demands this influence; we turn aside from the strife of worldly warfare and lean against

your breast as did the Disciple against the Saviour who loved him ! Betray thou not us with a kiss ! See to it that at the last great day the blood of your church be not required at your hands !

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Unaiming charms with rays resistless fall,
And she who means no mischief does it all."—AARON HILL.

Most cheerfully do we turn aside from the dissensions and unseemly brawls which have so fatally marred the serenity of our "happy valley," to follow the fortunes of our pleasant acquaintance, Frank Stanton, who had been summoned to his home for the avowed purpose of seeking an alliance with the family of his father's eldest and firmest friend, Arnold.

Mr. Arnold, who for the first time we here present to the reader, was a gentleman of the olden school, the tempting acres of whose plantation had many a long year stretched out beside those of the Hon. Mr. Stanton, but which had been sadly neglected during many years of Mr. Arnold's absence from his estate.

In years gone by, a dark cloud had settled around the home-hearth of the Arnolds. The youngest daughter, a child of exquisite loveliness and promise, had mysteriously disappeared when abroad with its nurse

for the daily airing ; she had been left upon the border of a creek during the temporary absence of the woman, who had gone, as she said, to pull for it some bunches of mistletoe, for which the child had clamored. At first the nurse had concealed the little girl's absence, hoping, she said, to discover her ; but when at length the alarm was given, the household pet had disappeared. When every endeavor to find the child had alike proved futile, the unhappy father had taken his drooping wife and sole surviving daughter to Cuba, where he had devoted himself to seeking oblivion and a fortune.

As is frequently the case with persons who have been many years exiled from the scenes of earlier associations, Mr. Arnold later in life awakened to a longing desire to return to his former home ; to restore and beautify it, to bear hither his household goods, and announced his determination to sleep in the home of his fathers.

The early and half romantic friendship which had formerly existed between the neighbors was renewed, and from chess-playing and champagne, and the never-to-be-forgotten euchre, the father of the son and the father of the daughter glided into matrimonial speculations, and hit upon the happy project of uniting their children and their treasures.

As the young people were equally attractive in person and purse, a demurrer from either did not seem

likely. Frank was summoned from the North, and Edith was bidden to make ready for the altar ; but with what satisfactory results, we leave to the telling of our Adonis himself, who, it is to be presumed, is more familiar with his own wooing than the disinterested historian of Minden.

Letter from FRANK STANTON to HORACE BRYAN, Esq. :

“ MY DEAR MENTOR :

“ Behold me, then, no longer the acknowledged heir of the Stanton domains, but simply plebeian Frank, shorn of all, because he cannot forget in his devotion to Mammon some other material things.

“ I am disgraced and disowned forever ! and that, too, by the best and fondest of fathers. Two weeks more, and I shall have returned to Minden, to the kindest of Mentors. I will complete my studies, enter the profession, and together we will administer justice as ‘ Dombey & Son.’

“ But I anticipate. You were in my father’s confidence in regard to the reasons of my recall ; you shall be in mine as to the reasons of my disgrace.

“ It was scarcely three evenings after my return that I was summoned to my father’s library ; I was informed that, being the only son, and growing up, etc., etc., I was expected to sustain the honors of our house, and strengthen its social position by a suitable alliance.

"To all this, I most dutifully assented ; whereupon I was quietly informed that, having been fortunate enough to renew his intimacy with a friend of early life, whose daughter was the possessor of every virtue and accomplishment, he had already proposed for my acceptance, and, he was happy to inform me, with entire success !

"I received the announcement in courteous silence ; and when, upon the day following, I was trotted out to be reviewed by my future owner, I flatter myself my appearance was not discreditable to the matrimonial turf ! The father received me with charming urbanity, the mother with patronizing approval, and the daughter—with civility.

"Well, we rode, we walked, we sang, and we romanced ; but although we grew very merry and intimate, it was plainly to be seen that—we were only five less than seven.

"Not long since, as I was turning the leaves of the lady's music, a note fell to the floor. As I raised it, the flush upon her cheek riveted my attention, but I conquered my curiosity, and extended the paper without once glancing at the superscription. She perceived it, I think, for after a little charming hesitation she returned it to me.

" ' Perhaps,' she said, ' if Mr. Stanton would have the kindness to read it, it might save him a world of trouble.' "

"The lady was right, certainly ; for the note was a

most amorous confession, exceedingly well expressed, and bore the full signature of her lover. I held it in my fingers, looking, I am sure, remarkably foolish, while she struck a few chords upon the piano.

"As she glanced coyly toward me, with her dark lashes drooping over her beautiful eyes, I confess, my dear Mentor, that the least possible pang of jealousy seized me, and I returned it with a simple bow of acknowledgment.

"Edith flushed indignantly.

"'Shall it be answered, Mr. Stanton?'

"'As it pleases you ;' and perhaps she grew a little pale.

"'You are not as frank with me, Mr. Stanton, as I am with you. Let me be honest ; I fancied the letter would gratify you.'

"'And you, Edith?'

"The lady's taper fingers stole to her crimsoning cheeks, and I could not be unconscious that tears sparkled over the diamonds that encircled them, as she said, almost in a whisper,

"'I loved him long before you and I ever met!'

"'Love him, then, forever, my dear Edith,' I cried, rapturously, taking her hand for the first time in my life between both of mine ; 'God forbid that my shadow should ever cross your path.'

"Her soft hand trembled, and a bright smile kissed the dew from her cheek.

“ ‘ You have never loved me,’ she said, archly ; ‘ I forgive you, but you will now understand why ! ’

“ My answer was entirely confidential, and for a few minutes we were the happiest of mortals ; but presently a new thought suggested itself—the parental approval !

“ ‘ I am convinced,’ Edith said, ‘ that my father would prefer Mr. Stanton above all others for his son-in-law ; partly because his word, which he considers inviolate, is pledged, and still more that he has long known and admired the father. My father will not forfeit his pledge even to promote my happiness ; but if the refusal could originate with your family, I am confident of his approval.’

“ ‘ Consider yourself free, then, my dear Edith. My father will most certainly withdraw his claims, if, indeed, that alone can secure your happiness.’

“ The lady thanked me so cordially, I could not doubt but she was equally sincere, and now for the result.

“ It was now my turn to summon my father to the library, which I did the very next morning. It was evidently my duty to take the consequences of this rupture upon myself, since I knew my father never could be made to understand that Edith could actually prefer another to his son ! I am afraid I made wretched work of my revelation, for it was a full hour by the dial before he comprehended my mission. You should have

seen him then, a perfect Cato in majesty, confronting me in his anger.

“ ‘Am I to understand,’ he thundered forth, ‘that you refuse to sustain my pledge to the Hon. Mr. Arnold?’

“ ‘If you please, sir.’

“ ‘And that you decline the honor of his daughter’s hand?’

“ ‘Decidedly, sir.’

“ ‘And for what reasons, sir?’

“ ‘For such as can be known only to myself.’

“ ‘My father’s brow grew black as midnight.

“ ‘You may retire, sir,’ was rather hissed than spoken; and you may rely upon it, I awaited no second bidding.

“ ‘A week after, my father sent for me.

“ ‘Had I re-considered our last interview?’

“ ‘I had.’

“ ‘And my decision?’

“ ‘Was unchanged!’

“ ‘There was a stately bow, and a very graceful parting salute.

“ ‘My step was upon the threshold, but I confess to you, my dear Mentor, my heart was in my mouth; I hesitated.

“ ‘My dear father,’ I said, ‘allow me to justify this apparent obstinacy. I beg you to believe, that to thwart your wishes brings more pain to my heart than

it can possibly do to yours. Time will explain my present decision, and you will then understand that never so much as now have I been worthy to be your son !'

"I paused for encouragement to proceed, but my father was silent. The bow and salute were repeated, and nothing remained for me but to retire.

"The next morning I found upon my dressing-table a civil note, advising me to return to you for the completion of my studies, enclosing a draft upon my father's banker, and a very decided intimation that thus ended my expectations !

"I shall return to you, then, my dear and most excellent Mentor, and if any thing could reconcile me to this unmerited displeasure, the solace will most assuredly be found in the renewal of our old intercourse, and in the conviction that whatever befalls me, I can rely upon your friendship, which, like the old oak that stands sentinel by your cottage-door, will remain unmoved alike by sunshine and storm.

"Yours, &c.,

"FRANK STANTON."

Squire Bryan went home with Frank Stanton's letter in his pocket, the happiest of men ; he found Nannie and Mary chatting in their usual quiet way in the cosy parlor.

The husband threw himself upon the sofa, and placing his head upon Nannie's lap, gazed thoughtfully at Mary

through his half-shut eyes. Yes—she was very beautiful—very ; the exceeding softness and purity of her child-like face, the long lashes that rose and fell so reluctantly over the bluest of laughing eyes, the poetical brow and finely arched eye-brows, classic nostrils, and that peculiarly chiselled lip, so exceedingly rare in the moulding of beauty ! All these, with the rose-tinted complexion, and wealth of fair hair floating out in ringlets of most fantastic grace, gave to that exquisite face a mythical beauty, so often an inhabitant of the fairy realms of imagination !

Then, too, how regally the head bore itself upon the white full throat ! how gently the rounded shoulders sloped away to where the finely moulded arms became eloquent with the poesy of motion, and the whole person expanded in undulating beauty !

The Squire watched her taper fingers coquetting with the embroidery, until, twining his own hands in Nannie's, his fancy went wandering back to the days of his own courtship, and the hours his wife's white hands had woven meshes for his own fond heart.

"A penny for your thoughts, Horace," cried the wife, releasing her hand from his warm clasp to stroke back the thinned locks which had gathered many a silver thread since her fingers had first caressed them.

"Well, I have something to tell you, little wife—an agreeable surprise to us all : we are to have Frank Stanton back again."

Nannie gave a cry of delight ; but Mary only bent lower over her embroidery, and her small hands shook like aspens.

“ But I thought Frank never was to return to his law, but go on wooing a fortune ! ” said the wife, when the first surprise was over.

“ Nevertheless his father suggests his return, and Frank has written to announce it. He is probably upon the road before this.”

Nannie was full of conjectures, anticipating all kinds of pleasant arrangements for the future ; but Mary’s needle flew faster and faster, and still the crimson deepened upon her cheek.

That night, when the young girl retired to her own room, what a world of undefinable bliss flooded her young heart, banishing slumber from her eyes, but bringing no weariness to her soul ! She was to live, then, beneath the same roof with Stanton, and associate daily with the object which she had regarded as a deity worthy her purest worship.

The last few months had given wondrous tone and delicacy of finish to the young girl’s inner nature ; she had found, in the refinements of her new home, the substance for which she had so vainly sighed—that higher life, the longing after which had only mocked and embittered her former existence. The world was before her, tinted with the roseate coloring of a first and earnest passion.

Formerly she had shrunk from Mr. Stanton as unworthy to receive the courtesies of a common acquaintance. The very atmosphere of her rude home she felt must be repulsive to his cultivated tastes, and however unjustly, that repulsiveness must necessarily envelop her own person. The budding graces which had concealed their promise when chilled by those sullen skies, opened in full luxuriance when nursed by the genial sunshine of affection.

She was not herself indifferent to this mental metamorphosis, nor to the exquisite loveliness which her mirror reflected, since she felt both to be the keys that should unlock the treasures she coveted. Something whispered to her believing heart that there was a meaning in Stanton's return, which she alone rightly interpreted. And so the days glided by, while her new-born buoyancy of spirit imparted a flitting elasticity of motion whenever she moved, and warbled in the musical gushings that mocked the songsters of the skies, until Frank Stanton resumed his old position in the family, and looked the admiration he even then did not venture to speak.

The young man was evidently in many respects unlike the Frank Stanton we have known. There was an earnestness in his tone and manner, a sincerity of bearing, unlike his former gay good-nature. Life had evidently become a reality to him, and he had armed himself to run the race manfully. Blackstone and Story no

longer lay at his feet unread. His step was firmer, and his eye beamed with a keen insight into the present and future; he was quick to decide and energetic to act; and Squire Bryan was never weary of laying his hands in his old caressing way upon his shoulder, and uttering his praises with honest pride. No father could read his son's success with more self-congratulation; and indeed, although the yoke had never chafed the youthful shoulders that bore it, had not Frank been a child of his own discipline?

Nannie, with equal pride, rejoiced in the growing graces of her own *protégé*, and notwithstanding she pronounced the attraction of the young couple a very foolish affair, was constantly engaged in a series of manœuvrings that assumed its perfect propriety.

"I am surprised," said Frank one day to Squire Bryan, when they were in confidential discourse in regard to his future, "that Mrs. Bryan never alludes to the change in my pecuniary affairs."

The Squire smiled, as, removing his segar, he pressed out the fire, and laid the stump carefully aside—

"Well, the truth is, she does not know any thing about it."

Frank gazed in surprise; "But I expected, nay, wished her to be in my confidence."

"Possibly; but I thought better of it. These women are always talking over things among themselves,

and I think, for the present, the matter had better rest between you and me."

Frank was silent, as if from thought.

"And Mary," he asked at length, "does she still suppose me carrying out my father's matrimonial views?"

"I cannot say; she certainly has no authority from me to think otherwise."

Frank whistled a favorite refrain, and fidgeted a little in his study chair.

"I do not think she had better remain under that impression," the young man said, seriously; "I would rather she should know of my father's displeasure."

"And why?" asked his Mentor, turning his keen eye suddenly upon him; "what is Mary's opinion to you, or yours to Mary?"

A quick deep flush passed over the young man's face, as he wheeled directly in front of his malicious friend.

"Much, sir. As much as Nannie's could have been to you, or yours to Nannie."

"Right, my boy;" and the Squire extended a hand, which the other clasped in silence, while both seemed struggling to keep down their emotion.

"I feel almost certain that this unnatural estrangement between father and son will not long continue," the Squire went on, "unless some new irritation keeps it alive. The simple fact of your unwillingness to marry

Miss Arnold will be forgiven when your father discovers her new engagement. Indeed, he will then understand, or suppose he understands, the reason for your firm opposition. But if he discovers that, not content with baffling him, you have dared to entertain an affection for a person, nameless, portionless, and of Yankee origin, there is little hope he can ever be brought to regard you with leniency. If, as I infer, you desire Mary to be aware of your preference, my advice is, that you do not commit yourself until you are certain that time and circumstances cannot alter your present purpose; and if possible, allow your father an opportunity to know your future wife before he condemns her!"

Frank felt the cogency of the reasoning, but, alas, it was woefully averse to his frank, impulsive nature.

"And Mary; can I allow myself to trifle with her unsuspecting nature? How long would she tolerate such prudence?" asked the young man, warmly.

"As long as she hoped! As long as she was sensible no other was preferred before her."

Frank hesitated. "No," he answered; "what you advise is the voice of prudence, perhaps, but not the prompting of love like mine. The experience of the last few months convinces me that my fate is centred here. I will never deserve my father's anger, but you may be sure I shall never be unmanned by it. I will pursue the right, with 'Heart within, and God o'er head!' I would not exchange one thread of Mary's

golden hair for the wealth of the Indies. We are young; we are hopeful. With your blessing we will never despair!"

"God's blessing on you, then, son of my love, as you shall henceforth be of my old age! My harvest has never been so golden as your father's, but it will suffice for you and me if fortune frown upon your honest effort."

The kind Mentor's voice grew husky, and Frank, grasping his hand anew, bent over it with a heart too full for utterance. Worthy of each other were the spirits that mingled in that sacred embrace!

The evening shadows stole in over and around the dusty old office, but still the two men sat planning for the future, and building up beautiful air castles which they decked with the gorgeous drapery of hope. The young heart leaped forward, panting for future contest, while the old grew youthful and earnest beneath the magnetism of that noble spirit.

Later in the evening, Frank Stanton told his story at Nannie's home-hearth. It was surprising what an exhilarating effect his bad fortunes produced in the little circle. Nannie joined in the adoption with a sincerity equal to her husband's, while Mary's long lashes drooped lower and lower, until the soft cheek sunk into the sheltering palm, which vainly endeavored to conceal the tell-tale blushes.

Still later, the curious moon came peering in at the

window. Horace and Nannie had been long away ; and although the moon kissed two young faces radiant with bliss, she smiled to see that with all her stratagem she could only throw one shadow upon the wall !

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Yonder comes news! A wager, they have met."—CORIOLANUS.

*Letter from HON. F. STANTON to ABRAHAM CUTTER, ESQ.,
Attorney and Counsellor, New York:*

"DEAR SIR:—I wish you immediately to take such measures in the following matter as, upon understanding it, you may think proper:

"About fourteen years since, Mr. Arnold, a neighbor of mine and a very old friend, lost a daughter under these circumstances: the nurse had the child out one morning on the premises attached to my friend's house, and leaving it for a few minutes on the bank of a small stream, while she obtained some clambering wild flowers that the child cried for, upon her return the child was not to be seen. The nurse in her fear concealed the loss of the child for some hours, and when it became known all search was vain, though continued for many days. My friend some months after left the country, to endeavor to dissipate the sorrow the circumstance caused.

"He recently returned; and some casual words dropped by this nurse having given rise to the belief that she had at least a suspicion, never before spoken, of the fate of the child, caused her to be very closely questioned, and revealed the fact that she believed the child to have been stolen in a spirit of wickedness and revenge by a very bad negro fellow then in my possession; and by him sold or otherwise disposed of to a company of vagrants that had been for some time previously in the neighborhood. The child was remarkable for its delicate beauty.

"Unfortunately the slave implicated is no longer in my possession; having some time since run off—to the North, as I naturally suppose. I have made no effort for his recovery, and it is possible that he may now be beyond pursuit. His recovery, however, seems to be imperatively necessary.

"He answered here to the name of Cæsar; was large and gross in person, ebony black, and having the heavy movement of a strong man, much cunning, and being generally a bad fellow.

"Inform me of what you undertake immediately, and much oblige

"Yours, respectfully,

"F. STANTON."

ABRAHAM CUTTER, ESQ., *Attorney and Counsellor, to*
HON. F. STANTON :

“DEAR SIR :—I have traced a fugitive answering your description to the town of Minden, in the State of ———.

“We had, perhaps, better concert personally the course to be followed, as under ordinary circumstances I doubt the possibility of capturing the negro ; for if my information is correct, the people of the neighborhood are devoted to him. He preaches regularly in a church that has been built purposely for him, seats in which were recently rented at an enormously high rate ; and his hand is sought in marriage by several ladies of great wealth and high social position.

“Very sincerely and truly, etc.,

“ABRAHAM CUTTER.”

Not a moment was to be lost. Mr. Arnold and Mr. Stanton immediately started northward upon the parental pilgrimage.

The journey was prosecuted with little delay until within a day's journey of Minden, when they found themselves compelled to await the early coach in a little village so exceedingly destitute of attraction that the delay seemed doubly vexatious.

Eager and restless, our travellers wandered out in quest of adventure, when seeing the villagers flocking

towards the church, they joined the crowd and went in, supposing the services to be of a religious character. Judge, therefore, of their surprise, when with the easy assurance of a speaker conscious of being well received by the audience, Cæsar strutted along the aisle, and rolled his eyes complacently over the multitude. Despite the changes time and circumstances had wrought in his appearance, the elder Stanton recognized in the evening orator no less a personage than the distinguished individual of whom they were in pursuit, and who, as the reader already knows, tho' the lawyer did not, was upon a lecturing tour.

Uncertain of the best method of procedure, our travellers incautiously exchanged sentences, which were immediately understood by the curious listeners near them, and it was directly rumored through the house that strangers were present for the express purpose of kidnapping the lecturer !

Our travellers, all unconscious of the storm gathering around them, sat absorbed in their own speculations, until the unusual excitement among the crowd attracted their attention, and they became conscious that all eyes were suspiciously turned upon themselves.

The lecturer in the meanwhile silently disappeared, and our travellers, thinking it wise to do the same, took their hats and were quietly passing out, when they were confronted by an officious little man with a jack-knife in one hand and a roll of " pig-tail " in the other,

who desired to be informed who they were and why they were present ?

Our travellers replied that they were citizens of the United States, travelling upon their own private affairs, and requested the little man to allow them to pass out.

The owner of the pig-tail and jack-knife demanded in a louder tone to be informed if they had not been conversing together in regard to the lecturer ?

Our travellers intimated very delicately that it was none of the little man's business, and that if he had any business of his own it would be well for him to attend to it.

Little gentleman was now in a state of tremendous excitement, and flourishing his knife and pig-tail right and left, commenced haranguing the crowd in the most violent manner, urging that the gentlemen should be taken into custody until their intentions were known.

The crowd closed in around our friends, and the clamor became so fearful that the travellers thought it advisable to suggest that, since they could not be treated like gentlemen by gentlemen, a few of the most prominent citizens present should attend them to the hotel, where they would be happy to satisfy them of their honorable intentions.

A few intelligent persons immediately urged the adoption of this gentlemanly concession, as being the one most likely to do justice to the strangers ; but their voices were soon drowned by the pig-tail clique, who

cried aloud that the proposal was simply a stratagem for escape.

The little gentleman, the throng having slowly moved out of the church, now mounted a convenient



elevation, and after having deposited a fresh quid in his left cheek, harangued something as follows :

“Let us not be cheated out of our rights, gentlemen ! Who are these men who have intruded in here to-night, evidently with the most felonious designs ? They confess themselves to be Southerners ; they confess themselves to be interested in our lecturer ! They

confess themselves to be anxious to retire when questioned as to their business here, thinking, no doubt, we shall be foolish enough to allow them an opportunity to kidnap our colored brother, and carry him back to his former servitude! [Immense excitement.]

“Gentlemen, shall it be allowed? [Yells of ‘No! no!’] Are we not all created free and equal? [Cries of ‘Yes! yes!’] Are the stars and stripes of our country’s flag to be dragged down to the dust? [Screams of ‘Never! never!’] This is the voice of the people—the Godlike people! and the land upon which you stand is the land of freemen! The eagle of liberty flaps his broad wings above our Alpine heights! one foot rests upon the Atlantic, and the other upon the Pacific sea! [Voice—‘Don’t! you’ll make him split his straddle!’]”

“Order, there!”

“Let ’er rip!”

“Gentlemen—[here the little man smashed his fists together]—my voice is for liberty! [Tremendous cheering!] Never, so long as a drop of Puritan blood flows in these veins, will I consent to stand by and see a fellow-creature robbed of his freedom! [Cries of ‘Nor I! nor I!’]”

“Let these gentlemen lay but a finger upon this man, and we will not answer for their blood!”

[“No talking about blood!”]

“I say blood! [Smash went the little man’s fists

again !] Who cares for human life when our liberty is endangered ? I say with Patrick Henry, ‘ give me liberty or give me death ! ’ ”

Here a tall, quiet, pale-faced man placed himself by the little man’s side.

“ Gentlemen, hear me, and let this unreasonable excitement subside ! This is no time for harangues upon freedom ; where is the occasion for either this gentleman’s eloquence or blood ? What have these gentlemen, who came in here to-night strangers, relying upon our hospitalities, done, that they should be delayed and insulted by behavior and language like this.

“ If you doubt them, have they not themselves proposed the only rational manner of allaying your suspicions ? If you are sincere in your profession of equal rights, cannot you perceive that these strangers have rights also, which, if you violate, you make yourselves amenable to the law which protects the North and the South alike ? Let us not disgrace our manhood ; we are not ruffians ; let us act like men, and forbear like Christians.”

Little gentleman again smashes his hands together, and wiping his forehead with a red bandana, jumps up and re-commences :

“ Who talks of Christian forbearance when our liberty is in danger ! ”

Cries of “ Hold yer yawp, can’t ye ? ” and “ Go on Squire.”

Squire Bemis made an attempt to proceed, but the little man wasn't to be put down.

"I tell you I will be heard."

"Set down! Squire Bemis! Squire Bemis!"

"I tell you I won't set down."

"Stand up, then! Go on, Squire!"

"Gentlemen," cried the little man, now folding his arms with Roman dignity, "I am not the man to be put down by Squire Bemis, or by you! I will be heard, if I have to stand here until the clock strikes one!"

"Don't get sweaty!"

Little gentleman gnashes his teeth.

"Better let him go on. I have known him these ten years, and if he says he'll stand there, he will!"

Groans, and hisses, and cheers! meanwhile little man's eyes flash fire.

"Come, hurry up your cakes, little un'!"

"Say what you've got to say, quicker the better!"

Little man gets frothy about the mouth.

"Why don't you go on!"

"Where is the long-legged eagle!"

"Order! order, there!"

"Come, little un'—we're waitin'!"

One or two missiles flew through the air, falling near our travellers, taking off a man's hat, and knocking over a little boy on the way.

Intense excitement, and renewed cries of order.

In the crowd still around the church-porch, ladies were trying to get out—a few treating themselves to hysterics, while the children tramp after, treading upon their dresses, and crushing the old men's corns in the stampede. Groans, profanity, and cries of order, prevail. In the mean while the lights are extinguished, and when they are re-lighted our travellers had disappeared, and David Dickey appeared.

"Gentlemen," he said, "allow me to say your lecturer is safe; and so far as he is concerned, this excitement is entirely uncalled for. The evening is so far advanced, it is not advisable to resume the lecture, and our engagements are such we cannot remain after this evening, although we will endeavor to fulfil our engagement later. Let me advise that you retire quietly to your homes. In the mean while, in behalf of the lecturer, I thank you for the cordiality of his reception among you, and trust we shall meet again. I wish you good evening."

Here the little man interposed: "I suppose you design to refund our money?"

"Cries of "No, no."

[Little man, indignantly]—"For one, as we have had no lecture, I shall refuse to pay."

David hands him a ninepence.

"The crowd can have their money refunded as they pass out."

Cries of "Give it to the little 'un—he's earned it!"

[Voice receding]—"Go home, little un', and take a whiskey-skin; you're sweaty, and you'll get cold!"

Here retreating footsteps, loud laughing, nigger melodies, swearing, and speeches mingled in such a jargon that nothing was discernible.

An hour after, nothing remained in or around the "House of God" to bear witness to the patriotism of the occasion but little puddles of tobacco-juice, and the indescribable odor of the "sovereign people!"

The peacefully inclined portion of the community quietly retired to their homes; but the economical little patriot, who was so much more lavish of his eloquence than his ninepences, determined to air his patriotism at all hazards; and gathering a few ill-advised persons around him, proceeded valorously towards the hotel, to which Mr. Stanton and his friend had retired.

The landlord informed the crowd that the gentlemen, weary with travel, had retired for the night, and as he would himself be responsible for the good behavior and peaceful intentions of his guests, he begged they would go quietly away, expressing himself willing to "treat all round" if they would kindly accede to his wishes. This they consented to do in consideration of the "liquoring;" but no sooner were the glasses emptied than they returned to the assault more zealously than ever. The crowd without grew larger and more desperate, while the landlord, aided by such of his

friends as he could rally, prepared to resist their encroachments, and protect the travellers.

The yells without were becoming savage and hideous, when our travellers appeared in the bar-room, and Mr. Stanton said, in a calm voice—

“If this gentleman’s house is to be besieged, and the night made hideous in this manner on our account, we are ready to meet these ruffians either peacefully or otherwise. Throw open your doors, and let us speak to the excited crowd; surely they must listen to reason.”

“For God’s sake, gentlemen, retire at once,” cried Squire Bemis; “you must be entirely ignorant of the persistency of our people, if you fancy they would believe a word you should utter. They have condemned you without hearing, and they would lynch you the moment they had you in their power. There is but one alternative: prepare to proceed on your journey. Horses are being got ready while we are speaking; the landlord will see you off, while I and our friends here divert the attention of the people. Farewell, gentlemen! do not judge Northern hospitality by this villainous exhibition of the rabble. Remember, it is the froth of the barrel that carries off the impurities of the wine.”

The gentlemen shook hands cordially, and a little after, our travellers were pursuing the same underground railroad over which Cæsar and David had sped hours before.

CHAPTER XXV.

———"He is about it,
The doors are open."—MACBETH.

LATE in the day following a covered carriage stopped before the cottage-door of our friend Bryan, and Nannie fluttered hither and thither, as an elderly gentleman, burning with fever and wild with the strange fancies of swift-coming insanity, was borne into the cheerful guest-chamber, and tenderly placed between the snowy linen of the luxurious "spare bed." It was the Hon. Mr. Stanton, upon whom the late excitements and exposures had had their effect.

With the resolution of a strong will he had kept back the enemy, until he reached the shelter of his friend's roof, when as a child sinks into its mother's arms, he gave one pressure of recognition to the kind hand that clasped his own, and mental darkness enveloped him. Long weeks of burning fever ensued, during which the almost equally frantic son listened to the mournful ravings in which his own name was so con-

spicuously woven, and learned of all the parental tenderness that still flooded the old man's heart.

Night after night Frank kneeled by his bedside, praying for forgiveness for every pang his waywardness had inflicted ; but the wild eyes turned wearily away, while the sufferer vainly prayed for his son ! But there was one voice that never pleaded in vain—one hand that never was repulsed—one sweet face that always brought solace to the invalid—one step that his quick ear recognized before all others. The gentle Mary never approached him but with acceptance ; his medicines were received from her hand ; his hot brow grew cool beneath her caressings. However wayward his mood, the steady firmness of her blue eye quelled his ravings, and he would listen to her sweet melodies until slumber wrapt him in blissful unconsciousness.

In his delirium he fancied her to be his guardian angel, before whom the demons that tortured him shrank back abashed, nor dare approach her charmed presence. Like a wayward child he would amuse himself with twisting her long tresses over his fingers, and holding them in the rays of the sun, to catch their peculiar golden glimmer, which he imagined was the reflection of the "Golden City" from which she had wandered.

As he became convalescent, his admiration rather increased than diminished ; and when he discovered that this angelic being was the adopted daughter of his friends, his only surprise seemed to be that Frank never

should have even alluded to her wondrous loveliness. The hours of convalescence, usually so tedious to the impatient invalid, assumed a half-poetic tinge, as the fine old gentleman re-opened his softened heart to the influences of his son's affection, and the thousand and one kindnesses lavished upon him by his host and hostess. Above all was he never weary of feeling the soft palm of "little Mary" upon his temples, and as she toyed with his white locks, and bent above him with the witchery of heart-light and heart-shade gleaming from her blue eyes, it was little wonder that he felt within his own heart an apology for the admiration which he was sometimes conscious flashed out unbidden over the handsome face of his son.

At times, too, it must be confessed a suspicion darted through the father's brain that something deeper and stronger than a passing fancy might have allured poor Frank from the golden alliance with Edith.

It was in vain that Frank resorted to a variety of stratagems to draw from his father some unwary expression that might foreshadow his fate should he honorably confess his passion. Whether intentionally or otherwise, all such attempts were so completely baffled that the son shrank from opening his heart to the parental investigation.

The father, in the meanwhile, was undergoing a self-inflicted investigation, not a whit inferior to that with which his son honored him. His long-established prej-

udices seem to have been shaken by the virtues of the gentle waif, and despite his hankering after "blood," he longed to engraft the sweet bud upon the genealogical tree of the Stantons !

The struggle between pride and generosity was a severe one, but humanity conquered, and the Honorable Mr. Stanton magnanimously resolved to humble himself and surprise his son.

The day following this generous decision, when Squire Bryan came in as usual for an hour's political chatting, the conversation very unexpectedly took a sentimental turn, which the Squire was not long in perceiving was drifting towards his newly adopted daughter.

Now the Squire was perfectly aware of Mr. Stanton's doubly-refined stickling for "family ;" he knew that one drop of pure aristocratic blood was of more value in his old friend's eyes than coffers of gold. But Squire Bryan was a Yankee, accustomed to see

"Black, blue, and white
Mingle—mingle—mingle,"

and we are sorry to say had little fellowship with Mr. Stanton's ideas. When, therefore, after a long preamble, in which the Honorable Mr. Stanton endeavored to reconcile his conscience with his condescension, and closed with an insinuation that he had decided not to oppose his son in any future alliance, the Squire mali-

ciously enough determined to inflict a little righteous chastigation upon the patronizing offender.

"It is true," Mr. Stanton went on, "Mary is by no means the wife I should have chosen for my son; but then as her family is unknown, we can at least suppose her to have been of gentle blood."

"Oh, as for Mary," cried the Squire, carelessly, "her blood or origin has nothing to do in this case: Mary is engaged."

The aristocratic Mr. Stanton sprang to his feet, not unmindful of the quiet humor in the lawyer's eye.

"Served me right," blurted out Stanton; "served me right," he cried, testily. "I should have remembered my family, sir—my family. The very thought was madness, for which I stand rebuked!"

The Squire sat silently puffing his segar until his irate guest had resumed his equanimity.

"Yes, sir, Mary is engaged, and very eligibly, too, sir. I assure you, the family is not a whit inferior to your own!"

"Possible!" ejaculated the innocent invalid, pausing in his stampede to look his astonishment at the other family's condescension.

"I shall never consent to Frank's marrying beneath him," he added with emphasis.

As he spoke, the door opened, and Mary glided in with a package of letters for the gentlemen. Her quick

ear caught the fatal sentence, and she felt that her fate was sealed.

A few days after this conversation, Mr. Stanton announced his ability and intention of returning home at once. His illness precluded all possibility of benefiting his friend Arnold in his search for his daughter, and his prolonged absence rendered his presence upon the plantation imperative. Frank dutifully prepared to accompany him, and the leave-takings had already commenced.

It was late in the evening previous to the intended departure, before the family circle broke up, leaving Frank to take his farewell of poor Mary, and assure her whatever might betide, he would surely return to claim her as his own. But Mary's heart sank chill within her. The delicate and intuitive perception of character with which she was endowed, had revealed to her the knowledge of the father's heart more fully than it had ever been known to the son himself. She fancied that she saw the sacrifice by which she must be won; nor was she insensible that the wealth of her loving heart was a mere bubble when weighed with the evils springing from parental displeasure.

"Do not cling to me," she cried, with her tearful face upon his bosom; "I am a worthless weed which the ocean has stranded at your feet, and which pity alone could have rendered attractive. Do not embitter the life of your father—do not trample upon your own

interests. You are stronger than I ; speak but the word that shall make you free ! ”

“ Not if that word would pave every step of my future life with gold, my Mary ! What were riches without you to share them ? What were honors, and you not by to exult in my success ? My father loves you already ; let us trust to time to soften the foolish prejudice of birth. Love such as ours is of divine origin ; it springs from heaven, and to heaven it shall return ! ”

And so, embracing and embraced, the sweet face caught something of her lover's hopeful gleaming, and as she felt how utterly desolate the world would be to her, but for the sunlight of his smile, poor Mary believed, and was blest.

That night the Stantons left for home.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Whither, lone wanderer—whither art thou flown?
To what sequestered bower, or gloomy dell?
Say, dost thou go where sorrow is unknown—
Where trouble never enters, dost thou dwell?"—C. LLOYD.

AMONG the letters which Mary was taking to the gentlemen at the moment the cruel declaration of Mr. Stanton fell upon her ear, was the following :

MR. ARNOLD *to the* HON. MR. STANTON :

"MY DEAR FRIEND :

"Congratulate me. After these long weeks of intense solicitude, a little cloud arises in the East, no bigger than a man's hand, but yet indicative of success. I can scarcely restrain my impatience while I pen these lines to you, and I write because my companions must rest, since human nature is exhausted.

"To attempt a description of our will-o'-the-wisp movements would be useless. After my first interview with Cæsar, of which I wrote you, I was plunged in the very depths of despair.

"The fellow was so obstinate that neither promises nor threats availed, and I am positive the rascal would have baffled me, but for the timely aid of the young man who accompanied him, and who, you will remember, extricated us from our dilemma at the time we got involved with the 'sovereign people' at the church in Blank.

"This young man, who professed to be travelling with Cæsar simply upon a kind of Yankee speculation, readily espoused my cause, and proved to be equally shrewd, persevering, and conversant with the class of people with whom we have to deal.

"The family into whose hands Cæsar knew the child to have passed, was found after the most painful search ; but we were informed that, having no motive for keeping the little girl, they had given her to a wandering musician, who was travelling over the Middle States. So we advertised for the stroller, and succeeded in attracting his attention by promises that appealed to his self-interest. He answered from the western part of New York, and thither we hastened, only to be told that he had exchanged the girl with a beggar woman for a boy, thinking the transfer would be for their mutual interest.

"Here we were in danger of losing every trace. We explored every haunt of known misery, and lavished money upon such of those unfortunate creatures as allured us with false hopes ; but Heaven be praised, we

stumbled upon the very object of our search in an old farm-house where we had stopped for a glass of water. The young man David immediately recognized her as an old woman who had wandered from Dan to Beersheba, and who had every two or three years passed through his own village. The miserable creature's brains were so shattered, and her memory so treacherous, that it required all of David's tact to bring to remembrance the features of the wanderer. The poor babe had passed through such a variety of fortunes that it was impossible to describe her definitely. It was only when I mentioned the color of her hair, and shewed her the tress you have so often admired, that a glimmering of the truth dawned upon her.

"The child, she said, had been taken away by angels! She had lain down to sleep one day, beneath a tree in the open air, leaving the child to pull the wild roses that grew by the hedge, but when she awoke the little thing had disappeared, but she heard her voice high up in the air singing.

"It was in vain we argued and entreated—nothing could convince the hag that the child could have been living, and had probably strayed away during her slumber. But the superstition had fortunately impressed the locality upon her memory, and it seemed that she had yearly made a pilgrimage thither, to 'dream beneath the tree of angels,' as she called the spot of her strange experience.

“Accordingly we took the poor old creature with us, and proceeded upon our forlorn mission. We found the tree, beneath which she had erected a little monument of stones, and then we commenced inquiries among the inhabitants for the lost child ; but most of the families were of more recent date. Far back among the mountains we found an old man who was regarded as a kind of seer—but of unclouded intellect. Yes, he said, he remembered many years ago a child had been discovered wandering in the woods, but it was such a pale little thing no one cared to be encumbered with it, and it was sent to the poor farm.

“Believe me, my dear friend, when this heart-rending recital fell from the old man’s lips, every vestige of hope and manliness left me ; I fell senseless upon the threshold. David bore me back to the rude inn, and watched over me with the tenderness and assiduity of woman ; but repose was impossible, and we dragged ourselves to the poor farm, only to be told that even the locality of the farm had been changed, and the establishment had passed through the hands of at least a dozen different tenants. We advertised, and sent runners in every direction. As yet we have learned nothing more definite.

“David, who professes to be well acquainted with the country around us, thinks from the character of the New Englanders, and their universal kindness to such objects of charity, that if the woman’s story was true,

we must be in the immediate vicinity of those who can speak more definitely of the child.

“Imagine the anxiety of a father’s heart, who has traced his poor child through wanderings like these !

“It is fearful to think what she must have suffered, and I shudder to think what she may have become.

“Yours as ever,

“ARNOLD.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

"She cheers his gloom with streams of bursting light."—*SOLIMA.*

THE excitement of the late partings had scarcely subsided in the cottage of the Bryans.

Mary's sweet face still retained a shade of sadness, and her voice, always before gushing out into little snatches of delicious melodies, grew mute as the harp upon the willows.

The kind Nannie, seemingly unmindful of her wayward moods, left her to the quiet indulgence of them, thinking, perhaps, that solitude was the surest remedy for regrets like hers.

One day, in her wanderings, she had extended her rambles far away amid the romantic windings of a road long since abandoned and grass-grown; until, wearily seating herself, she had garlanded her brow and person with the graceful vines of the starry clematis, whose pale beauty seemed a fitting type of her own. As she twisted the tender stems, she warbled almost uncon-

sciously an old air, that seemed never to have been learned, but rather to have gushed up unbidden from some hidden spring; so moss-grown that its existence had been forgotten. The notes stole forth clearer and sweeter, until the old forest took up the echo, and fairies seemed playfully flinging back the musical cadence of the songstress.

The hoofs of horses approached softly, muffled by the untrampled verdure, and travellers paused to listen.

"Surely I know that voice," cried David, eagerly.

"Hush—hush—for God's sake, hush," cried Mr. Arnold, spurring his horse to David's side, and bringing it to a sudden stand still. "It is thirteen years since I have heard that air, and by heavens! if my daughter lives, she is here!"

Was it strange that in all their wanderings in pursuit of the poor waif, David had never once associated the thought of his foundling-playmate with the object of their search? And yet at that instant the veil fell from his eyes, and as if the heavens had flashed forth the mystery, he shouted back the wild cry, "She is indeed here!"

Like a frightened fawn the young girl sprang from her covert of green, and stood before them in her fantastic array! What poesy of motion—what grace of attitude, mingled with that expression of surprise! The long shining tresses, upon which time had flung no shadow, fell back from the uplifted face, revealing eyes

whose strange beauty had never been erased from the father's heart.

With a loud cry of exultation Mr. Arnold sprang to the ground, but only to fall senseless at the maiden's feet.

Little by little sensibility returned, and David, whose forethought seemed to encircle all around him, earnestly entreated Mary to retire.

"Go home, Mary," he said; "say to Squire Bryan that we are wishing to see him upon business of importance, and as soon as this gentleman is recovered, we will join you."

Mary flew to the cottage, but scarcely had she announced the approach of the stranger, when the travellers themselves appeared in the distance.

We will not dwell upon the scene or explanations that followed. One proof after another of the young girl's identity was established, in the absence of all of which, the wonderful resemblance of the young girl to the stranger must have proclaimed to the world the relation of father and child.

How Mary swooned, and Nannie wept, and the Squire rubbed his hands with delight! While David, with a face whiter than the pale clematis flowers that still clung to Mary's tresses, stood in silent despair, as he beheld every vestige of his own air castles crumble at his feet!

Happy Mary!

Thrice happy Arnold!

Silly Nannie and childish Squire !

But alas ! alas ! poor David !

We pass by the excitement of the villagers at the discovery of Mary's sudden elevation, as

"The idle wind, which we regard not !"

"Such is life," soliloquized Mrs. Kimball ; "the world is an immense water-wheel, always revolving. Very comfortable when you are up—intolerable when you are down !" Col. Johnson and his "inestimable lady" were among the very first to wait upon Mary with their very distinguished congratulations ! While Mrs. Hobbs gave vent to the fullness of her wonder in that old elegant exclamation, "Snooky !"

As for Miss Dickey, this little episode in the foundling's life only established the conviction that "ungathered roses" were liable at any moment to "have something happen to them ;" and so far as we know, is still awaiting the coming of the bridegroom.

Cæsar still perambulates the country, spending his time between lecturing and lounging, but never allows himself to pass the domicile of the fair Julia without feeling the pressure of the iron horse-shoe upon his breast !

Mr. Cary, after having effected the ruin of his church, accepted a "call" to a more thrifty vineyard, where, it is hoped, his former experience will be of service to him.

We are compelled to say that, since Cæsar's brief reign in Minden, a kind of African drought has settled down upon the little village. The "Monymment" of the Carean African Friend's Society became so shaken and rent by the dissensions of the sisterhood, that it fell into decay, and the places that once knew it, now know it no more forever. The "War of Black and White Roses" is ended, and ebony has ceased to be the hue *par excellence* by which the standard of patriotism and Christianity is tried.

Indeed, the blood of a white man in Minden is now considered as valuable as the blood of a black !

"Of terrors and fraud they have had enough."

THE END.

